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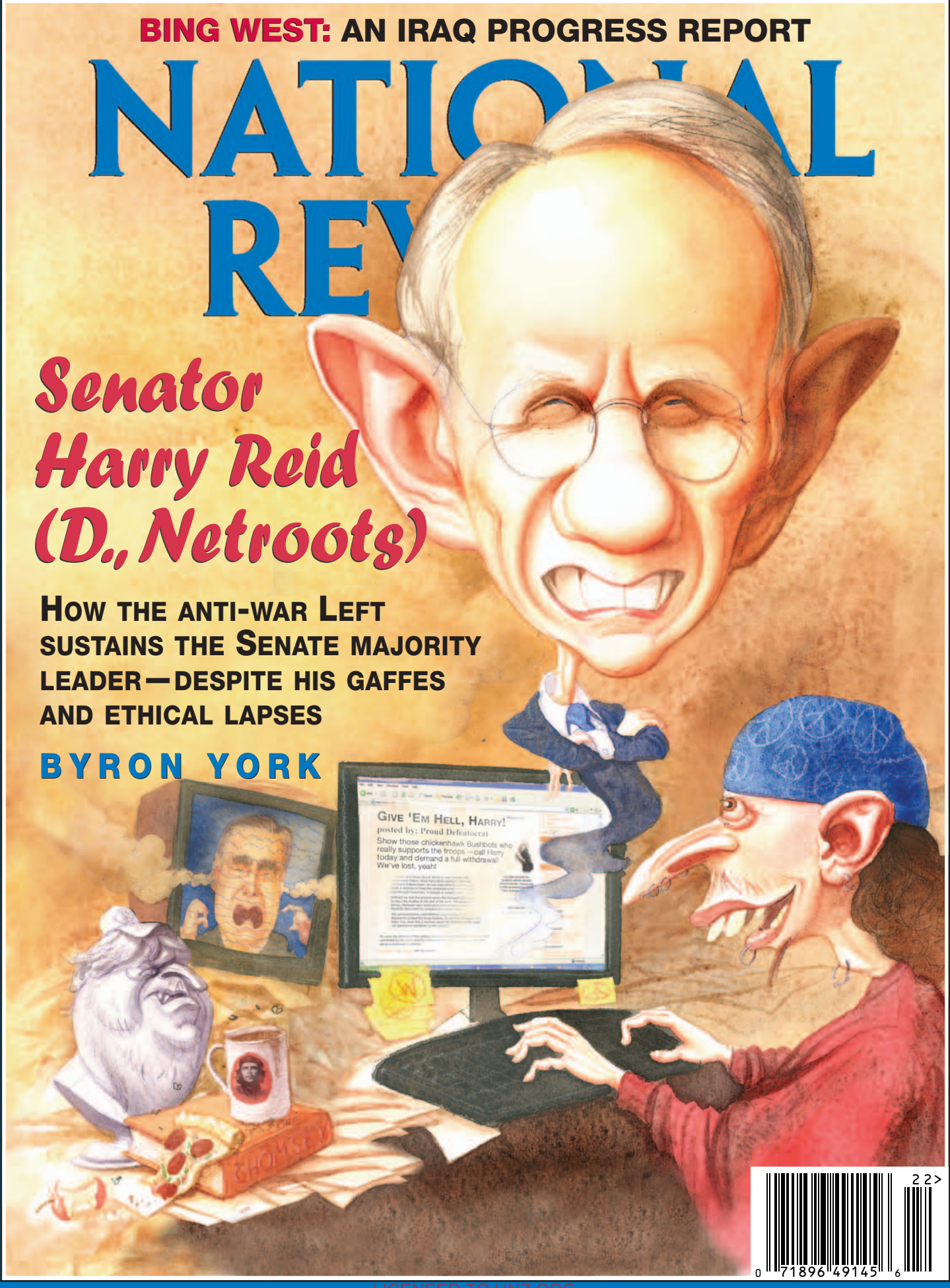
BING WEST: AN IRAQ PROGRESS REPORT

NATIONAL REVIEW

Senator Harry Reid (D., Netroots)

How the anti-war Left sustains the Senate majority leader—despite his gaffes and ethical lapses

BYRON YORK


GIVE 'EM HELL, HARRY!
posted by: Proud Defeatocrat
Show those chickenhawk Bushbots who really supports the troops—call Harry today and demand a full withdrawal! We've lost, yeah!
CHOMSKY

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NATIONAL REVIEW

MAY 28, 2007 VOL. LIX, NO. 9

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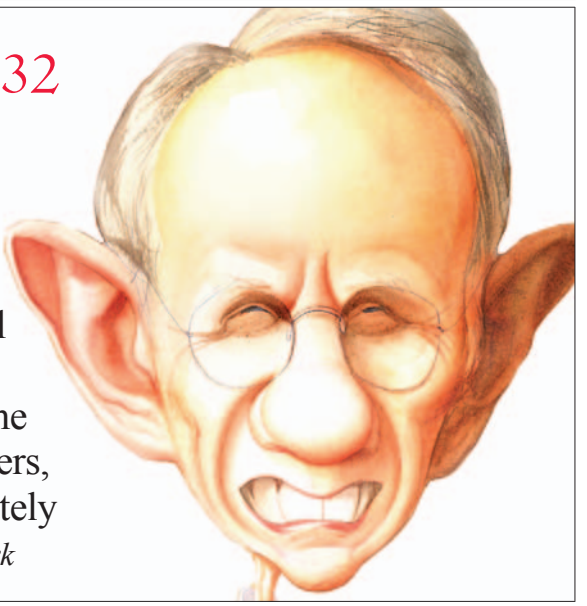
■ COVER STORY

Wild about Harry

Page 32

The far-flung "netroots," the loudest and most uncompromising force in Democratic politics today, love their "Give 'em hell Harry." And interviews with Democrats across the ideological spectrum suggest that Harry Reid is far more popular with his Democratic colleagues than some critics believe—or hope. But talk to Senate insiders, and they'll point to four factors that could ultimately prove the majority leader's undoing. *By Byron York*



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COVER: *Roman Genn*

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letters to the editor

BRUTAL MATH

Good to see the bald eagle is resurgent ("Baldly Back," April 30), but a cost-benefit analysis of the bird's recovery is in order. As John J. Miller reported, there were 417 nesting pairs in the lower 48 states in 1963. Since the ban on DDT, that number has swelled to 9,000 pairs. But DDT effectively controlled the *Anopheles* mosquito that carries the malaria parasite, reducing the number of cases to near zero. The ban, and our attendant unwillingness to use DDT in the developing world, has allowed the scourge to worsen. Some 350-500 million cases occur worldwide each year, and more than a million die from the disease, primarily children in sub-Saharan Africa. This is brutal math—it costs the lives of scores of black and brown babies to save a single eagle.

Radical environmentalists seem to lift their credo from the words of Charles Dickens: "If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population." My answer comes from the same source: "Forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered what that surplus is, and where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child," those millions in Asia and Africa and Latin America.

Clark Larsen
Holladay, Utah

BITTER (AND UNFILTERED) ENDER

It was quite a shock to read in John Derbyshire's article ("Keep Hope Alight!" April 16) of the British pol Michael Foot, a lifelong smoker still going strong at 93. Many years ago I ran into another old codger of 93 who had been puffing since the age of 10. Such longevity.

Both my parents and most of their friends were smokers while I was growing up, yet I still managed to become a champion swimmer in high school (holding one record for a dozen years). Secondhand smoke? Hogwash. Ayn Rand said she loved to smoke because it symbolized the conquest of the fire of the gods at man's mere fingertips.

I've been smoking now for almost 40 years and I use the kind of "coffin-nail" without a filter at the end. Three reasons why I won't ever quit: 1) because I'm told to—just like a kid; 2) I like the taste; and 3) the way you people drive makes me nervous.

Kenneth L. Mathias
Taunton, Mass.

WFB & PTB

Tears ran down my face as I read WFB's tribute to his wife ("Patricia Taylor Buckley, R.I.P." May 14). Until then, I had no idea she had passed on. I cried not because I knew her but because—through years of reading—I knew him. May God bless him and comfort him.

Loretto Stevens
New Albany, Ohio

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THE WEEK

■ At least if Hillary wins in 2008, we'll be able to move to France.

■ Ten Republican presidential candidates appeared onstage at the Reagan Library so that they could be hectored, bullied, and asked inane questions by Chris Matthews and John Harris. None of the candidates knocked any of the questions out of the park, but the most impressive performer was Mitt Romney. All of the candidates save Ron Paul believe that we can still win in Iraq, and should try. All of the candidates are anti-abortion save Rudolph Giuliani, who does not seem yet to have hit on the precise position he will pretend to believe. All of them want to cut taxes, although they have no serious tax plans; all of them want to cut spending, although they would not identify a program they would reduce. Maybe the candidates will have a better night when they operate under a different format. If they can't do better, it is going to be a long election cycle.

■ George Tenet's memoir, *At the Center of the Storm*, has been slammed left and right, often for the wrong reasons. In what context did he use the words "slam dunk"? In asserting that Iraq had WMD, or in asserting that the case could be made? But why is slam-dunkitude the relevant category? In a post-9/11 world, we could not let a regime of such dishonesty and malignity as Saddam Hussein's bluff such a question. Only now, when liberals and fainthearts have abandoned the Iraq War, have we retreated to pre-9/11 standards. Tenet scrambles, in his book, to find some footing in our current funk: efforts that fit seamlessly into his career as a successful operator, rather than an intelligence professional. Tenet's CIA did some things right (e.g., devising the game plan for toppling the Taliban regime), including, presumably, many things we have not yet learned about. But it missed the worst attack on American soil, ever. The DCI should have been asked to resign on the afternoon of the 11th, *pour encourager les autres*—not kept in place, and not given a Medal of Freedom. President Bush's unwillingness to punish failures such as Tenet has been a great failing.

■ Talk about Democratic unity! When *Washington Post* columnist David Broder chastised Senate majority leader Harry Reid for declaring that the war in Iraq "is lost," all 50 of Reid's Democratic colleagues in the Senate dashed off a letter to the *Post* attacking Broder. While the Democrats did not explicitly defend Reid's "war is lost" remark, they wrote, "the fact that Mr. Reid speaks his mind should be applauded, not derided." Other examples of Reid speaking his mind include calling President Bush a "loser" and calling Alan Greenspan "one of the biggest political hacks we have in Washington."

The Queen and friends at Jamestown *(see page 14)*

ROMAN GENN

So Democrats are united in defending Harry Reid's penchant for gaffes, while Republicans are united in enjoying it.

■ The arrest of six alleged jihadists for plotting to attack the U.S. military installation at Fort Dix, N.J., provided several useful lessons. First, it demonstrated the importance of remaining vigilant and reporting suspicious behavior to law enforcement. When the six conspirators, having recorded one of their paramilitary training sessions, foolishly took the DVD to a store for copying, a store employee notified the FBI. Second, the arrests highlighted the need for human intelligence. Thanks to an FBI source on the inside, the government was not left to guess based on disconnected bits of information. Third, agents were able to corroborate the human intelligence through, yes, electronic surveillance—in this case, recordings the informant agreed to make of conversations in which he participated. Our only defense against jihadists is to gather the best intelligence we can and kill or capture them before their deadly plans become deadly reality. Count us grateful that the FBI appears to have done just that.

■ Because the first Republican debate was held at the Reagan Library, with Nancy Reagan prominent in the audience, it was only natural that Reagan received respectful attention from

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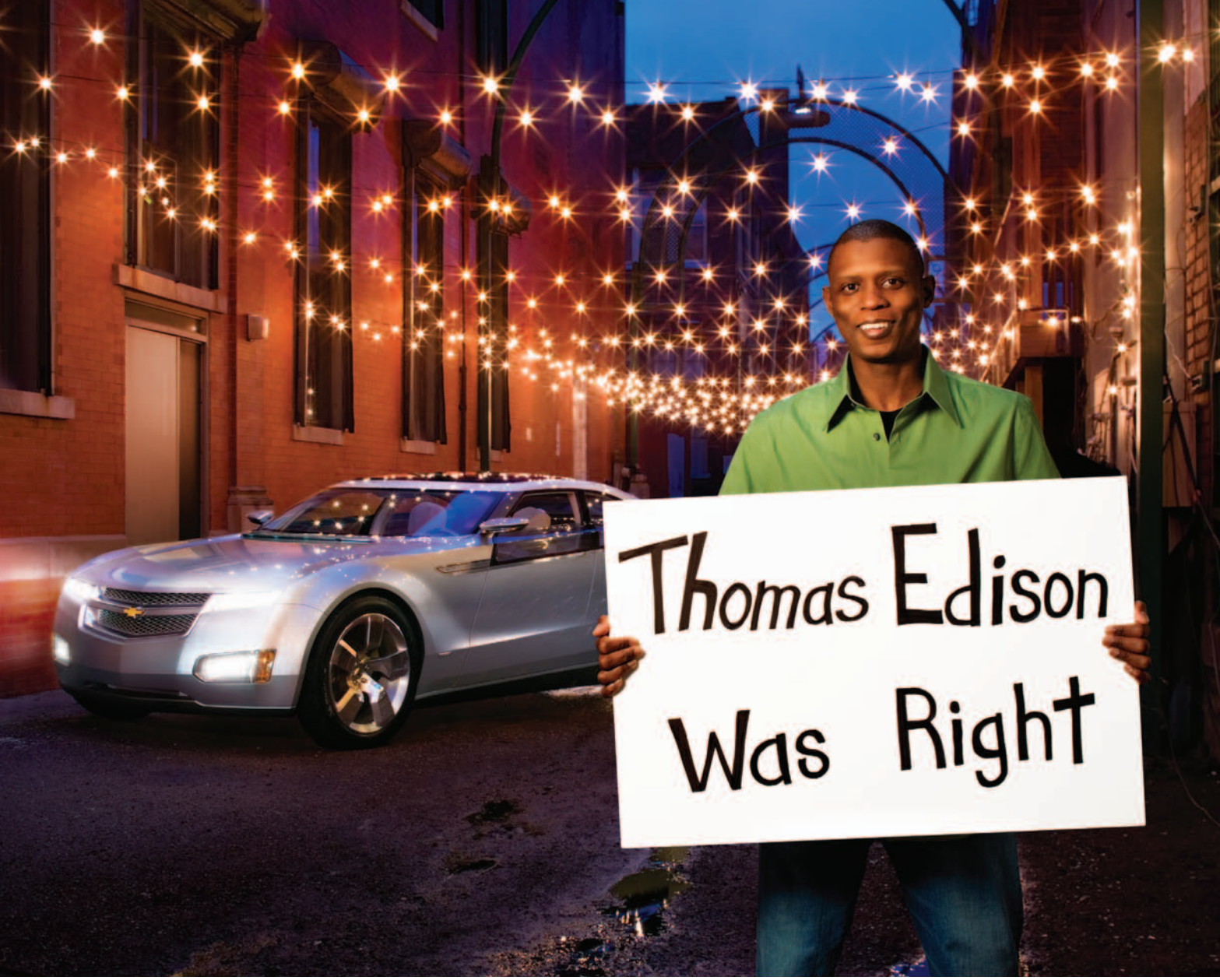

Imagine a car that plugs into an electric socket. One that uses zero gasoline and produces zero emissions. Thomas Edison imagined it, or something like it, over 100 hundred years ago. Today, I'm helping to bring it to life in GM's landmark Chevy Volt — a four passenger concept vehicle powered by GM's E-Flex propulsion system. It delivers 40 miles of pure electric driving, then a fuel efficient engine seamlessly powers up, re-charging the battery, and giving the Volt a total range of 600 miles with just a little fuel added.

It's just one part of GM's commitment to energy diversity — creating vehicles that use fuels from diverse sources, reducing our dependence on petroleum and lowering emissions. I'm part of the team in Detroit that's working on a transformation in vehicles today.

Jelani Aliyu

Jelani Aliyu

Lead Exterior Designer, Chevrolet Volt

GM

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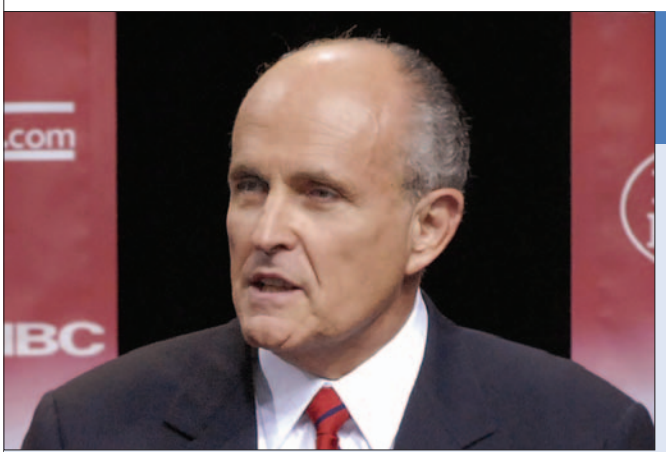
the candidates. Some critics, especially liberals who chafe at the retrospective bipartisan consensus on Reagan's greatness, accused the Republicans of idolatry. Well, Reagan was the most successful Republican president of the last century. He should be emulated. Democrats might have done better in 2000, 2002, and 2004 if they had embraced the model of their most successful recent president, Bill Clinton, instead of veering left. But to emulate Reagan one must first understand him, and we fear some confusion on this score has set in. We heard rather too much, both at the debate and after Reagan's death, about the former president's alleged sunny optimism. He was capable of stern and grim notes. How sunny was it to call the Soviets an Evil Empire? What Reagan had was better than optimism: It was political courage, rooted in confidence in his principles. Nor can Reagan be usefully emulated by simply aping his slogans—which are in any case themselves misunderstood. Everyone remembers that Reagan, in his first inaugural address, said that government is not the solution; everyone forgets his modifier, "in this present crisis." We no longer face double-digit inflation, 70 percent tax rates, or an enemy that could wipe out the human race. We need to apply old principles to new circumstances, to think anew, as Reagan did, as successful conservatives always do.

■ When Rudolph Giuliani announced his presidential run, we hoped that he could find common ground with pro-lifers. For that to happen, we suggested, he would have to follow the model of Kay Bailey Hutchison and the late Paul Coverdell, both pro-choice Republican senators who were allied with pro-lifers on the legislative issues of the day. Behind this advice



JAMIE RECTOR/GETTY

Cracked

MARA LIASSON, the often besieged liberal on Fox News, marveled at the differences between the Republican and Democratic presidential debates during a recent edition of *Fox News Sunday*. "I thought that in the Democratic debate there was much more unity," she said. "Everybody's kind of scrambling to talk about how they're going to end the war, but there were no big divisions on social issues. In the Republican debate, there are divisions. . . . I mean, there are real divisions there on the social issues."

This was an interesting observation that Liasson didn't get to follow up on. After all, there's a big "And therefore what?" to be answered.

It's easy to guess what she was getting at. For years, conservatives in general and Republicans in particular have been caught in a Catch-22 of liberal conventional wisdom. On one hand, the Right is supposedly too hidebound and dogmatic, unwilling to embrace dissent on social issues. On the other, the GOP is supposedly rife with division on social issues. The GOP is "cracking up" from the irrationality of its coalition, *and* its party line is too rigid.

Am I the only one who sees the inconsistency here? How can we be both too rigid and too loosey-goosey at the same time?

The explanation for our intra-party disputes is quite obvious, though invisible to those who don't want to see it: Despite its myriad problems, the GOP is still the natural majority party in the United States. Majority parties have internal debates and divisions because—get this—they're majority parties. Political majorities, pretty much by definition, are coalitions of disparate elements. The FDR coalition contained everyone from Communist Jews to southern aristocrats (and Klansmen).

Obviously the Republican-conservative majority is not reflected in Congress or in the polls right now. But this is not proof that conservatism has lost its majority so much as a sign of how many Americans, including many conservatives, are disgusted by the way Republicans governed in recent years. It's far more significant—and almost impossible to dispute—that the GOP is a more ideologically diverse party than the Democrats. Proof can be found in the presidential debates, as Liasson seemed to grasp. Rudy Giuliani, former mayor of the capital of Blue America, is pro-choice and still the frontrunner.

Now, some liberals will object that Giuliani may not get the nomination because of his liberal stance on abortion and other social issues, thus proving that the GOP is too rigid. But this is where the dishonesty of that Catch-22 comes in. Liberals never complain that *Democrats* are too hidebound on social issues, because liberals think their enforced unanimity on, say, abortion, is the height of wisdom. What bothers them is that pro-choicers can't win the same conformity in the GOP. So they pretend that this is some major handicap for the Republican party, when the truth is simply that a big party is going to have people who disagree with each other, while a smaller party is more unified.

There are "real divisions" in the GOP over social issues because there are "real divisions" in America on social issues too.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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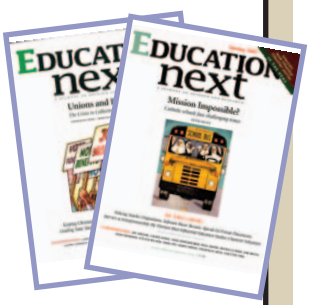

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—Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters

Catholic Schools Face Challenging Times

Despite a growing Catholic population (from 45 million in 1965 to almost 77 million today, making it the largest Christian denomination in the United States), Catholic school enrollment has plummeted from 5.2 million students in nearly 13,000 schools in 1960 to 2.5 million in 9,000 schools in 1990. Catholics make up about one-quarter of the American population, but their schools enroll less than 5 percent of all students. What happened to the Catholics? What happened to a school system that at one time educated one of every eight American children? And did it quite well.

—Peter Meyer

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The Week...

was the assumption that Giuliani's desire to win some pro-life votes would move him to think seriously about the issue, or at least its political dimension. Judging from the knots in which he has tied himself since then, that thought has not taken place. Whether through conscious decision or inattention, he has not followed the Hutchison/Coverdell model. He could have said, for example, that while he believes abortion policy should be permissive, the Supreme Court should permit states to set a different policy. But he has steadfastly refused to say that *Roe* was wrongly decided, let alone that it should be overturned; and he has repeatedly gone out of his way to say that the "strict constructionist" judges he favors might well vote to retain it as a precedent. Figuring out Giuliani's current position on taxpayer funding of abortion is beyond our ability, but the upshot seems to be that he would not actively push for it at the federal level—which is far short of what pro-lifers can accept. If Giuliani wins the nomination, it will be because he has won support from pro-choice Republicans and pro-lifers who do not consider abortion a high-priority issue. But it increasingly looks as though the pro-life movement will have no choice but to oppose his nomination.

■ The House voted to make "hate crimes" a federal offense. There is no evidence that adding hate-crimes laws on top of regular criminal laws does anything to deter these acts. And since most states already have hate-crimes laws, a federal law is doubly superfluous. The bill's definition of violence includes intimidation, which leaves considerable room for interpretation in the hate-crimes context. Opening the door even a little bit to prosecutions for having incorrect thoughts about race or sexual orientation would be a mistake. A new federal law in this area is unnecessary and dangerous, and President Bush is right to say that he would veto it if it reached his desk.

■ Calls for gun control after the Virginia Tech massacre were muted. Democratic politicians have seen the issue backfire on them too many times to take it up again. Only a few editorial pages took up the cause. There has been no rush of anti-gun legislation in state capitols. Quite the contrary: In the weeks since the killings, Kansas has enacted a law strengthening citizens' right to carry concealed weapons, and Tennessee has made it easier for citizens to use guns legally in self-defense. Texas governor Rick Perry has even urged that the state stop mandating that certain zones be "gun-free." Liberals in Congress have tried to revive their gun-control projects, such as a ban on "assault weapons." But the legislation with the best chance of passage would merely make it harder for the mentally ill to get guns, which is a reasonable regulation rather than an assault on the right to bear arms. (Virginia is strengthening its background checks, too.) Liberals having been routed on guns, a sensible conversation about policy can now begin.

■ President Bush sent Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi a letter explaining that he would "veto any legislation that weakens current Federal policies and laws on abortion, or that encourages the destruction of human life at any stage." So if the Congress tries to expand federal funding for abortion, or embryo-destructive research, he will veto it. Ditto for any attempts to allow the patenting of cloned human embryos, or to allow abortions on military bases, or to subsidize organizations that promote abortion overseas, or to force doctors to perform abortions. The president has the votes in Congress to sustain those vetoes. Pro-lifers should be asking the men who would replace Bush what they would do in the same situation.

■ As the saying goes, predictions are hard to get right, especially when they're about the future. But the trustees of Social Security have established a pretty good track record of getting the program's future condition roughly right. As a result, their predictions do not change much from year to year, and all that is new in this year's report is that our day of reckoning is closer to hand than it was a year ago. The program's costs are going to start rising sharply next year, when the first Baby Boomers become eligible for benefits, and its fiscal health is going to deteriorate even faster than Medicare's. If anything, this report understates the problem. It pegs the present value of Social Security's unfunded liabilities at $13.6 trillion. But that doesn't count $2 trillion in IOUs that the program holds from the rest of the government, and the government will have to come up with that money, too. People who deny Social Security is in serious trouble aren't paying attention—or worse.

■ Violence at the May Day rallies for legalizing illegal immigrants made the headlines—with, amazingly, the police getting more criticism for responding to it than the protesters got for starting it—but the real news is how few people showed up. A lot of the energy has gone out of the open-borders movement, as it has become clear that even with a Democratic Congress amnesty is a long way off. Democrats know that amnesty is unpopular, and they want congressional Republicans to agree to a bill before they vote on it. All of the presidential candidates are now at least talking about "enforcement first," whether or not they mean it. Congress

Vive Sarkozy!

Edwards gnaws at his knuckles.
Kennedy looks put out.
Feingold favors his liver.
Soros works on a pout.
Not since de Grasse squeezed Yorktown
Until it fell like fruit
Has France been so pro-Yankee.
The liberals are mute.

—W. H. von Dreele

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may have moved left over the last year, but the immigration debate is moving right.

■ Up to now, the biggest opponents of the Bush administration's initiative to build a limited missile-defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland have been Russia and anti-American Europeans. Now the Pelosi Democrats have decided to join their cause. The system, featuring ten interceptors and a powerful radar, would seek to defend North America and Europe from Iranian warheads. Because Iran doesn't currently have long-range rockets—one intelligence estimate says it won't get them until 2015—a House subcommittee decided it was safe to slash $160 million from a $310 million development budget. Threats nevertheless have a nasty way of emerging before they're supposed to. John Rood, the assistant secretary of state for international security and nonproliferation, told Congress that, with foreign assistance, Iran could get its long-range missile before 2015. It would be far better to have a functional system in place before it's needed than to need one later and not have it.

■ Our foreign policy may be defined by September 11, but our defense policy remains stuck on September 10. President Bush has called on the military to do more but has not given it much in the way of additional resources. So it is a good sign that Rudolph Giuliani, John McCain, Mitt Romney, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and John Edwards are all calling for a larger army. Mitt Romney also wants defense spending to rise to 4 percent of GDP. We seem to have reached a consensus—and about time, too.

■ When Turkey's foreign minister, Abdullah Gul, was nominated to the post of Turkish president, the army dropped heavy hints that it might mount a coup if he were elected. He belongs to the AKP, Turkey's ruling party, which has Islamist roots and some Islamist members, and the army's leaders see the presidency as a vital political safeguard against threats to secularism. Turkish secularism is not religious freedom on the U.S. model, but the control of Islam and other religions by a ministry of religious affairs—and the imposition in an overwhelmingly Muslim nation of a naked public square. But this is fast becoming impossible in modern Turkey, where the evolution of democracy and the spread of Islamic piety make it essential to develop a more tolerant secularism that will permit the public expression of religious commitment. The AKP, for its part, is not Islamist on the model of Hamas, but at its core a socially conservative Muslim party not unlike the German Christian Democrats. During its period in power, it has made no moves toward establishing sharia law. The constitutional crisis has been postponed, for now: The opposition withdrew from parliament, depriving the AKP of a quorum for Gul's election, and new parliamentary elections were announced for July. But the U.S. and Europe should watch carefully—and be prepared to help the Turks overcome their post-election crisis (if there is one).

■ Many Americans have been cross at France of late, and we hope Nicolas Sarkozy puts an end to it. As the new French president, he has promised to be a friend of the U.S.—an implicit repudiation of Jacques Chirac's haughty anti-Americanism. Sarkozy is good news for France, too, having backed an agenda of long-overdue economic reforms. They include deregulating the labor market, slimming down the public-sector payroll, abandoning the 35-hour work week, reducing public spending from its current 52 percent of GDP, and reforming the welfare state. Doing this will be a challenge, to say the least. Sarkozy's problem is that, with all its problems, France is stable. Those Frenchmen with work, especially those in the public sector, have a guaranteed comfortable existence even under high tax rates. France has not yet suffered a collapse of the economy under strikes and labor unrest similar to the one that persuaded the British that there was no alternative to Thatcher's economic and labor reforms. Taxes are high, jobs are scarce, and cars are burning in the *banlieues*, but life is far from unendurable. Sarkozy will need all his talents—and more—to win this Battle of France.

■ British prime ministers don't leave office unless there's a war that's going badly, or they are ill. It's the war in Iraq that has got Tony Blair. His new Labour party has a basic core of unreconstructed socialists, pacifist and anti-American in their bones. They have persuaded the country that Blair knowingly lied about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction in order to curry favor with Washington and demean himself accordingly. The background of an unpopular war has increased irritation with Blair's many mistakes, his pointless tampering with the constitution, the sleazy financing of his party, and the extravagances so flaunted by him and his wife. Unprecedented for a British socialist, Blair won three elections in a row. Announcing quite unnecessarily that he would not stand for a fourth election, he doomed himself. When the calf slips, the butchers' knives flash, to borrow an Iraqi proverb. For months now, Blair's party has been clamoring for a departure date, and Blair himself has seemed more and more persecuted, his lips a-quiver and his eyes watery in public appearances. Spin doctors are saying he will resign any day, but the junking of its leader in such messy circumstances looks like a prelude to New Labour's political meltdown. Going, going, gone, under a cloud that overshadows the whole lot of them.

■ America's best friend in Latin America is Colombian president Álvaro Uribe. He has brought more prosperity and stability to his country than any other leader in recent memory. He also offers an important regional counterweight to the ambitions of Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chávez. Congressional Democrats nevertheless have delayed a foreign-aid package that would help Colombia, as well as a free-trade agreement that would benefit both countries. They justify their coolness toward Uribe by citing Uribe's domestic foes,

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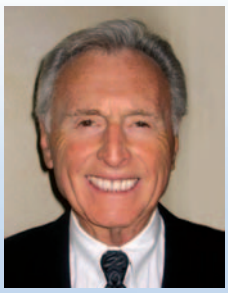

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who have tried to link the president to outlawed paramilitary groups. Colombians themselves don't seem nearly so startled by these unsubstantiated charges—in one recent poll, according to the *Washington Post*, Uribe's approval rating topped 80 percent. After meeting with Uribe on his recent visit to Washington, however, Nancy Pelosi saw fit to issue a press release that scolded Uribe's human-rights record. If only she were so tough on her new friends in Syria.

■ Chávez, Fidel Castro's clone, chose May 1 as the day to announce the nationalization of the major international oil companies operating in Venezuela. Every May 1 Communists used to hold triumphalist parades, and the symbolism may well be intended by Chávez, who loves to quote Marx and Lenin. Petróleos de Venezuela, the state oil company, has not got the billions of dollars required to pay for the expropriated assets, and the companies are negotiating what they are to receive, which may be in the form of oil. Chávez has observed that control of oil yields virtually unlimited control of the political process, as the example of one-man rulers from Moammar Qaddafi and Saddam Hussein to Vladimir Putin shows. The industry then lacks investment, its output diminishes and its resources are misspent, corruption and debt and inflation result, but the one-man ruler secures the financing to do his worst. Chávez has already nationalized large parts of the economy, and threatens also to take over steel and banks. The familiar specters of bankruptcy, starvation, and violence haunt Venezuela.

■ Because Cuban dissidents and truth-tellers are so seldom honored by the world at large, it is especially gratifying when they are. Recently, two Cuban writers won prestigious awards. One is in exile, the other in prison. The first is Raúl Rivero, a former political prisoner, now in Spain. He won that country's Ortega y Gasset Prize. The second writer is Normando Hernández González, still a guest in Castro's gulag. He won a PEN award—the Freedom to Write Award. Friends of freedom and truth bow their heads in appreciation.

■ Six years ago, Jian-li Yang swung by our offices, to talk about China. He was almost shockingly impressive. He had been a leader of democracy protests at Tiananmen Square. And he had two Ph.D.s: one from Berkeley, in mathematics, and one from Harvard, in political economy. He was a bracing combination of intellectual and human-rights activist. Jian-li headed an outfit called the Foundation for China in the 21st Century, in Brookline, Mass. And he had a family: a wife, Christina Fu, and two small children. Christina and the kids were American citizens; Jian-li had "permanent resident" status. Not long after we met him, he was arrested, in China. He had gone there to investigate the stirrings of a labor movement in the country's northeast. After his arrest, Jian-li simply vanished, as can happen in a police state. He resurfaced in a typical kangaroo court, and was sentenced. For the last five years, Jian-li's family and supporters have been watching over his case, trying to get the world interested in it. We heard disquieting reports from time to time, particularly about Jian-li's health. But information was hard to gain. On April 27, very good news was received: Jian-li had been released. He is under heavy restrictions, not yet able to leave China for the United States. But he is out of his dungeon. And we reaffirm an old truth: It is in part thanks to people like Jian-li Yang—who come up rarely but crucially in history—that shackled millions have a chance.

■ A Chinese judge accused of corruption has died in jail of "adult sudden death syndrome," according to Chinese authorities. There is no word on whether the offending swaddling could be located and tried in court. The judge's family discovered on the corpse a gash across his lips and other wounds. The government claims the prisoner sustained the wounds falling during an escape attempt; his family is not so sure.

■ Nowhere has Chinese Communism exacted a more savage toll than in Tibet. Half a century after the Chinese army marched into Lhasa, Tibet has seen its agricultural system dismantled, the vast majority of its monasteries dynamited by Red Guards, its traditional leadership forced into exile, and scores of thousands jailed, "reeducated," tortured, murdered, or dead of famine. Deng Xiaoping's reforms brought Tibetans a measure of religious freedom, but oppression still abounds: As recently as last year, a party of mountain climbers filmed the Chinese army as it opened fire on a group of Tibetans fleeing to Nepal. Five American tourists have just embarrassed Beijing again—by traveling to the north base camp of Mt. Everest, which is in Tibet, and unfurling banners that called for Tibetan independence. The five were arrested, questioned, paraded before the state-run media, forced to sign an apology, and expelled from the country. Had they not been foreigners, they would have met a much less agreeable end.

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AS HEARD ON PAUL HARVEY NEWS
THE BEST AIR PURIFIER EVER
Works 4 Ways to Attack Pollution from Air, Surfaces and Fabrics

Works to eliminate odors, dust, smoke, pollen, germs, mold, bacteria, viruses, pet dander, dust mites and much more

Will eliminate the most noticeable indoor air pollutants in just 15 minutes
Provides relief from allergies and sinus

By John Whitehead, Media Services

Biotech Research has announced EdenPURE™, the ultimate air purifier.

The EdenPURE™ is the best and most advanced air purifier on the market.

It runs super quiet and requires no filter replacement.

Unlike typical air purifiers which have only 1 or 2 mechanisms of eliminating pollution, the EdenPURE™ has 4 mechanisms which eliminate pollution.

There many different types of pollution and many of them, especially the worst, cannot be eliminated with the limited mechanisms of old-style air purifiers. The EdenPURE™ 4-mechanism system destroys all of the types of pollution.

The remarkable EdenPURE™ not only eliminates pollution from the air, but also eliminates pollution embedded in walls, ceilings, floors, carpets, furniture, clothing, and on countertops and other surfaces. It sanitizes everything in the house. The majority of air pollution comes from contaminated surfaces and fabrics.

The EdenPURE™ relieves allergies, asthma, respiratory problems, provides better sleep, more energy, and better health.

The air purification technology in the EdenPURE™ is that used by the federal government to purify air in the Space Shuttle and the International Space Station.

Old style HEPA filters mainly only remove dust and some allergens. They do not remove the most harmful pollutants such as bacteria, viruses, mold and yeast.

And if you have one of those air purifiers that has no fan, beware. More will be explained on this as you read on.

The EdenPURE™ has a super advanced fan that runs so quiet that you would have to put your ear up next to it to know that it's even running. And the EdenPURE™ is virtually maintenance free.

For more on the new EdenPURE™, here is my remarkable interview with John Whitakre, Chief of Research and Development for Biotech Research.

Q. Biotech Research has been in the air purification business for a long time and your previous air purifier model is an all-time best seller and was super effective. Why is the new EdenPURE™ air purifier so much better?

A. Yes, our previous model was an all-time best seller and in our opinion was the best air purifier on the market, which was also the opinion of our customers.

But the EdenPURE™ is much more advanced. Our previous model used 2 very effective mechanisms to eliminate pollution, which were combinations of activated oxygen and ultraviolet light.

The EdenPURE™ utilizes 4 much more advanced electronic air purification mechanisms.

The advanced technology in the EdenPURE™ is that used in spacecrafts such as the Space Shuttle and the International Space Station.

Q. What about those air purifiers that have no fan?

A. It has been well documented in scientific tests that an air purifier without a fan cannot possibly remove pollution to any substantial level. Those types mainly remove pollution that is very close to the unit. That's fine if you're purifying the air in a broom closet, but not for a wide area. Also those units have you wiping off a plate to clean off the trapped pollution. But unless those units have ultraviolet light, that plate contains live bacteria and viruses that can be harmful.

Q. How does the EdenPURE™ eliminate pollution without requiring the air to go through the unit, and how does it eliminate pollution on surfaces and fabrics?

A. The EdenPURE™ has 4 electronic mechanisms of eliminating pollution that mimic the way it is done by nature's thunderstorm. Thunderstorms produce highly activated oxygen which destroys pollution and puts negative ions in the air that also destroy pollution and also promote better health. This super activated oxygen produced by thunderstorms is the most devastating to pollution and it is also the source of that aroma that you smell after a thunderstorm that people associate with super fresh air.

Three of the 4 electronic mechanisms in the EdenPURE™ go out and seek out pollution throughout the room, on surfaces, and in fabrics like guided missiles. The pollution cannot hide. These guided missiles also kill bacteria, viruses, yeast and mold.

The EdenPURE™ eliminates all pollution. Amongst the hundreds of pollutants EdenPURE™ eliminates besides bacteria, viruses, mold, yeast and allergens are: fungus, formaldehyde, fecal odors, perfumes, cologne, creosote from fireplaces, methylene chloride, phenols, PCB's, humic acid, DIMP's, glycerols, kepones, methyl ethyl keytones, acetone from fingernail filings, styrene, nitro compounds, formic acid, benzonic, butanes, ethanes, pentanes, propanes, methanes, alcohols, cyanides, detergents, phosphates and many more too numerous to mention.

Q. Does the EdenPURE™ require filter replacement like the old-style HEPA air purifiers?

A. No. There is a small 4 inch by 8 inch pre-filter that you simply clean periodically by running water over it. This pre-filter is made of highly durable mesh that will last a lifetime.

Q. So then the EdenPURE™ sanitizes everything in the house?

A. Yes. It sanitizes the air, walls, floors, ceiling, furniture, carpeting, countertop surfaces, sinks, bathtubs, toilets, and even sanitizes your clothes.

Q. How well does the EdenPURE™ work on eliminating odors?

A. The EdenPURE™ will eliminate all odors. It eliminates odors from cigarette smoke, urine, mildew, cooking odors, and any other odors in your home. The EdenPURE™ odor elimination is so powerful that it will eliminate the odor of a skunk in minutes.

After eliminating the odor from the air, the EdenPURE™ then goes to the source of the odor. It eliminates embedded urine in carpet, and cigarette smoke that is embedded in carpet, furniture, wallpaper, and clothing. It also destroys mold and yeast.

The EdenPURE™ Whole House Model purifies air in an area up to 3,000 sq. ft.

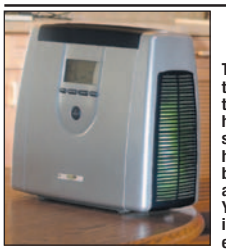
The EdenPURE™ Area Model purifies air in an area up to 1,000 sq. ft.

End of interview.

For readers who want to obtain the EdenPURE™ at this 10 day sale price please see the Special Readers Discount Coupon on this page. Those readers ordering after 10 days from the date of this publication must pay regular price.

EdenPURE™ - Never breathe bad air again

The EdenPURE™ Whole House Model



The EdenPURE™ Area Model

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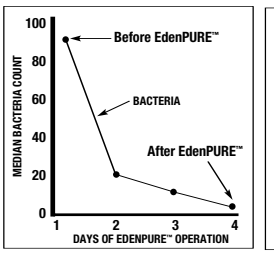

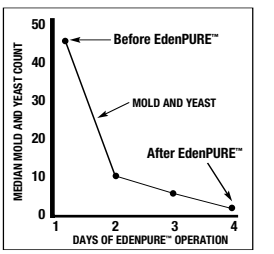

EdenPURE™ eliminates most pollution in 15 minutes. Bacteria, mold and yeast are among the most difficult pollutants to eliminate. Old style air purifiers never eliminated them. The EdenPURE™ eliminated virtually all the bacteria, mold and yeast in only 24 hours. This independent laboratory test was conducted by Dr. Dee M. Graham, one of the leading air pollution experts in the world.

Testimonies of a few of the many EdenPURE™ satisfied customers

The EdenPURE™ is the most remarkable product that I have tried in years. All of the claims hold true. Not only did it eliminate the dust in my house, I have not had a sinus headache or scratchy throat since I began using it. The whole house smells fresh and clean. You would never be able to tell that I have two dogs and a cat. It is also nice not to have to bother changing filters. You just plug it in, turn it on and forget about it. It is truly refreshing to use a product that does everything that it is supposed to do and more. ***Michelle Goldsmith***

Before using the EdenPURE™ I had to take antihistamines and use allergy/sinus nasal spray. I was embarrassed because my eyes were red and I always sounded like I had a cold. I then got the EdenPURE™. I plugged in the EdenPURE™ and went about my daily duties when I suddenly noticed I wasn't coughing or wheezing or clearing my throat. This was incredible. The EdenPURE™ really works! I am so happy. My eyes are clear and I can breath. I've tried many other air purifiers, they're all in my storage room with other failed products. The EdenPURE™ truly does what it claims to do. ***Diane C. Vance***

SPECIAL READER'S DISCOUNT COUPON

The price of the EdenPURE™ Whole House Model, which purifies air up to 3,000 sq.ft. is $372 plus $22 shipping for a total of $394 delivered. The price of the EdenPURE™ Area Model, which purifies air up to 1,000 sq. ft., is $302 plus $12 shipping for a total of $314 delivered. People reading this publication get a $75 discount, free shipping and handling and pay only $297 for the Whole House Model delivered and only $227 for the Area Model delivered if you order within 10 days. They come in the decorator color of grey which goes with any decor. There is a strict limit of 3 units at the discount price - no exceptions please.

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THE WEEK...

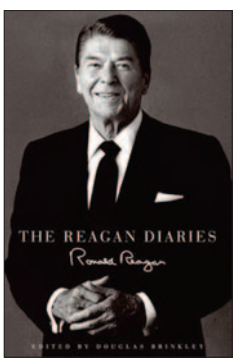
When the 2008 Olympic torch is carried from the summit of Mt. Everest and across the Tibetan Plateau, remember that it is crossing a land that has been brutalized.

■ Romania recently agreed to let the United States use four Romanian military bases. The prime minister of Romania, Calin Popescu Tariceanu, commented on the agreement. For decades, he said, Romanians had "only one hope: that the American troops would come and free us from Communism." Today, however, "Romania is no longer a victim looking for a savior, but a partner of the United States in the fight against terrorism." Romania should be commended for rejecting the alternatives it had open to it: placing itself under the benevolent guidance and protection of Russia, or imitating the sophistication and enlightenment of its western neighbors.

■ Herodotus may have been on to this story, when he reported "a goat-footed race" of men, though he located them in modern-day Russia. But we will let the BBC continue the tale, in its own words. "The best-known goat in Sudan has died months after being 'married' to a man in the South Sudan capital, Juda, the BBC has learned. Local elders ordered a man found having sex with the goat, later called Rose, to 'marry' her last February. 'The idea was to publicly embarrass the man,' says Tom Rhodes, editor of the *Juba Post*, which first ran the story. . . . The 'husband,' Charles Tombe, said he was drunk at the time but has since refused to comment on the issue. . . . Rose, black and white, is believed to have died after choking on a plastic bag she swallowed as she was eating scraps on the streets of Juba."

■ Queen Elizabeth II and Vice President Cheney visited Jamestown, Va., to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the founding of Britain's first permanent settlement in North America. There was hoopla, tours of a reconstructed ship and fort, presentations of recent archeological findings. Capt. John Smith made Jamestown a personal romance; later historians have elaborated on the sufferings and failures of the settlers; we feel discomfort at the Indian wars and the introduction of slavery. But the little venture had world-historical importance. Virginia's general assembly, including burgesses, or elected property owners, first met in 1619—the transplanted seed of self-government. America saved the world from totalitarianism in the 20th century, and has led the fight against Islamofascism in this. A small start, great returns, and more still to come.

■ At the altar of a Virginia church, a Nigerian canon lawyer clad in a white-powdered wig stood and read an edict relating the election of the Rev. Martyn Minns, a conservative American priest, as a bishop of the Anglican Church of Nigeria. Thereupon Minns processed through the nave, knelt before the Nigerian church's primate, Archbishop Peter Akinola, and amidst joyous hymns was consecrated. His installation marks a formal schism in the worldwide Anglican Communion, which has for four years been riven by the Episcopal Church USA's election of an openly gay bishop for its New Hampshire diocese. Altogether about 30 parishes, including historic Truro Parish (where George Washington served in the vestry), are now affiliated with Rt. Rev. Minns's bishopric, known as the Convocation of Anglicans in North America. Organizationally, CANA is an overseas mission of the Nigerian church, marking a strange reversal of colonial fate: Europe once sent Christian missionaries to Africa, but now the traffic flows the other way. The Episcopal Church has bristled at the intrusion—its presiding bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori, complained to Akinola that he transgressed diocesan borders and thus "violate[d] the ancient customs of the church." In his response, Akinola offered no apologies, thinking it sufficient to note the irony of the American church's leader so belatedly seeing value in "ancient customs."



■ Ronald Reagan's White House diaries, to be published by HarperCollins and excerpted in *Vanity Fair*, confirm what his letters and radio commentaries proved to liberals who had consigned him to duncehood while he governed: Reagan was a clear, concise writer—a sign of a clear mind. There are no masterpieces of malice, as in the diaries of John Quincy Adams, but there is much pith, sometimes brutal, occasionally droll. Of Alexander Haig's resignation: "Actually the only disagreement was over whether I made policy or the Sec. of State did." His near-assassination: "Getting shot hurts." Moammar Qaddafi: "Beneath contempt." Lowell Weicker: "a pompous, no good, fathead." Bob Woodward: "He's a liar." Alas, there is also the occasional boo-boo: "Rite to Life people say [Sandra Day O'Connor is] pro-abortion. She declares abortion is personally repugnant to her. I think she'll make a good justice." Homer nodded, Babe Ruth whiffed. We are lucky to have these diaries, and to have had their author.

■ Four hecklers interrupted a speech by FBI director Robert Mueller at Harvard. Their slogans might have seemed relevant in the '60s: "Justice for Herman Bell," the Black Panther convicted of murder, and "We will never forget the role of the FBI in McCarthyism!" They were escorted from the lecture hall and arrested on charges of disturbing a public assembly. Soon, the campus indignation machine swung into action, and the ensuing conflation of the principle of free speech and the purported right to say or shout whatever you want, whenever you want to, does not speak highly of Harvard undergraduate thinking. An editorial in the school paper, the *Crimson*, saw a threat to "the bedrock principle of the unfettered exchange of ideas," and warned of "a chilling effect on the quality of debate and discussion that goes on at Harvard." The argument is trite and lazy. Left unconsidered by these supposed free-speech advocates is how respect for open discourse can be fostered by stopping it.

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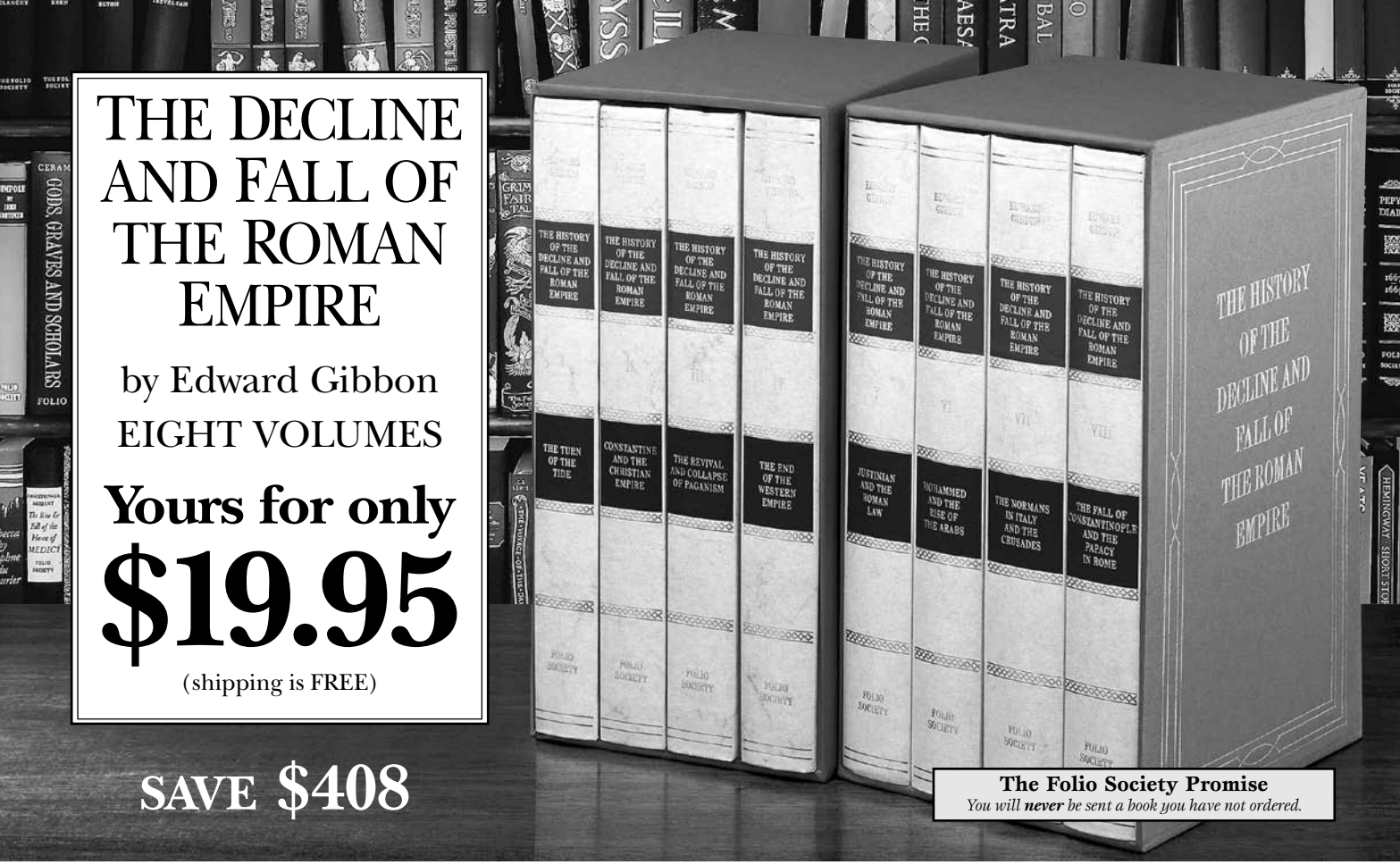
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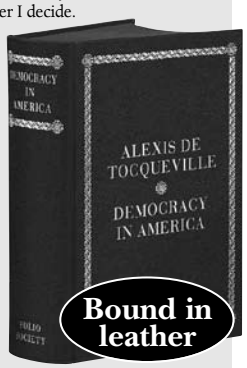

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The Week...

■ Mike Penner, a sportswriter at the *Los Angeles Times*, announced that he is a transitioning transsexual who is becoming Christine Daniels. Feminists will want to make sure that he does not beat himself up during Super Bowl XLII.

■ The little students in a kindergarten in Calabasas, Calif., have complained about a "weird man" who comes to school to sing them "scary" songs. That would be Bob Dylan, who has a grandson at the school. Hold on to that thought, kids, and don't let boomer rock critics talk you out of it; Dylan has been weird and scary for a long time.

■ The talent of Mstislav Rostropovich is hard to fathom. He was probably the greatest cellist who ever lived; he was also one of the greatest instrumentalists who ever lived. Quite possibly, no one has ever done more for an instrument than Rostropovich did for the cello: He is responsible for much of the cello repertory that exists today, for composers simply ached to write for him. He was also an excellent conductor, an excellent teacher, and a very good pianist. "Slava" was talented, yes—but also brave. In the Soviet Union, he sheltered Solzhenitsyn when it was dangerous and costly to do so. In 1989, when he was an American citizen, he went to the Berlin Wall, as Eastern Europe was springing free. He played Bach alongside that wall. And in 1991, he flew to Moscow, for some more playing and some more rallying: The Yeltsin government was under attack from old-line Communists. Mstislav Rostropovich packed a lot into his 80 years. He died on April 27. R.I.P.

AT WAR

Abandoning the Troops

THE president vetoed the Democrats' supplemental-spending bill for Iraq and Afghanistan, promptly and rightly. The bill was tantamount to a declaration of surrender. By requiring troops to begin withdrawing, possibly in as soon as 90 days, it would have destroyed Gen. David Petraeus's strategy—centered on the troop surge—even as that strategy begins to show a few signs of success. It would have removed the most important force for stability in Iraq—us—and shifted power toward Iraq's nastiest political players. It would have convinced al-Qaeda that its terror campaign had succeeded in shattering the American will to win. The probable outcome of all this would have been a nadir of U.S. influence worldwide and an emboldened jihad against the West.

Democrats think Iraq is already lost, but refuse—outside of Harry Reid's unguarded moments—to admit this forthrightly. Instead they speak of fighting al-Qaeda in Iraq "from a distance."

That idea is ludicrous. Consider Anbar Province. The stunning but fragile recent progress there is a result of Sunni tribes' turning against al-Qaeda, confident that they have the U.S. military at their back. Our troops have been clearing and holding in places such as Ramadi—something the tribes aren't capable of doing on their own. Likewise, political allegiances have a chance of shifting toward the Iraqi central government only if it is capable of providing security. A U.S. pullout would make that impossible.

After Bush's veto, Democrats are scrambling to come up with Plan B. They have boxed themselves into a politically dangerous corner: Unless they deliver a bill Bush can sign, and pronto, they will be blamed for abandoning the troops. And yet the hard Left—including not a few Democratic members of Congress—will not support a bill unless it is perceived as bringing about the end of the war.

Over in the Senate, Hillary Clinton is suggesting that Congress rescind its Iraq War authorization. As she probably knows, this would be an empty gesture. First, it would be subject to a presidential veto. Second, Congress authorized the president shortly after 9/11 to fight al-Qaeda anywhere in the world—which, last time we checked, includes Iraq. Democrats know that it would be masochistic to repeal this earlier authorization, and are not going to touch it. Third, and most important, Congress cannot, by revoking its blessing of operations in Iraq, eliminate the president's constitutional authority to wage war. Democrats who want an Iraq pullout have one way of getting it, and that is to exercise the power of the purse.

How are we supposed to leave Iraq without creating a vacuum in which al-Qaeda's Salafists and Iran's Khomeinists vie for dominance of the Middle East?

The House's Democratic leadership is aiming to pass a bill that provides enough funds for two months. The administration would then have to report on whether the Iraqi government had met certain political benchmarks—for example, enacting an oil-sharing law—after which a second vote would be required to release the rest of the funds (which would get the military through October, the end of the fiscal year).

Setting hortatory goals is fine, since everyone knows what the Iraqi government should ideally do. But making them binding—or implying that failure to meet them will mean American withdrawal—is likely only to get Shiite backs up at a time when they are already being asked to make difficult concessions in the face of a horrific round of suicide bombings. Moreover, the two-part approach would put U.S. commanders in the impossible position of planning for operations without knowing whether the funds for them will run out in a matter of weeks. If this is the Democrats' idea of "supporting the troops," it is a curious support indeed.

What strikes one most about recent Democratic maneuvering is the total absence of concern for conditions in Iraq or the consequences of defeat there. How are we supposed to leave Iraq without creating a vacuum in which al-Qaeda's Salafists and Iran's Khomeinists vie for dominance of the Middle East? Are Democrats at all bothered that the consequence of withdrawal would likely be an Iraqi genocide? They strive to control the war's prosecution only to hasten its end—and if they have their way, that end will be an ignominy.

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■ AT WAR ■

One Cheer for the Hot New Memoir

The uses of George Tenet's book

RICHARD LOWRY

Former CIA director George Tenet's new book is the most effective bipartisan initiative of the year. His *At the Center of the Storm* has been clobbered by the Left and the Right, and rightly so. The Left criticizes him for not speaking up when he was in power if he had so many misgivings about the Iraq War. The Right objects to his after-the-fact criticisms of Bush-administration figures and his neglect of the CIA's clandestine service—a neglect that played a major role in the intelligence disasters over which he presided. And both Left and Right recoil at Tenet's self-justification, which is extreme even by the standards of a Washington if-only-they-had-listened-to-me memoir.

Yet there is a kernel of good in Tenet's book. Underneath the excuse-making and the score-settling, Tenet's portrayal of the pre–Iraq War intelligence on Saddam Hussein's weapons programs dispels key contentions of the "Bush lied, people died" crowd. He captures the essential nature of intelligence—that it's usually fragmentary and uncertain—and reminds us of the post-9/11 environment, in which policymakers were inclined to put the worst interpretation on incomplete information, lest they encounter another nasty surprise. Rather than undermine the case for war, Tenet's book—no matter how he has tried to market it during high-profile interviews—tends to support it.

Tenet's book certainly does not deserve three cheers, or even two. But it does deserve one—lonely and perhaps not very enthusiastic—cheer.

In a book that is hard on Bush-administration hawks, Tenet rebuts one of the persistent anti-administration charges, although one that's never had any evidence behind it: that the Iraq intelligence was skewed in reaction to pressure from Vice President Dick Cheney and others. "Intelligence professionals did not try to tell policymakers what they wanted to hear," he writes, "nor did the policymakers lean on us to influence outcomes."

The infamous Downing Street memos from 2002 quote the head of the British Secret Intelligence Service, Sir Richard Dearlove, saying that "intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy." The word "fixed" became an obsession of anti-war conspiracy theorists. Tenet explains, "Sir Richard later told me that he had been misquoted. He reviewed the draft memo, objecting to the word 'fixed' in particular, and corrected it to reflect the truth of the matter." Dearlove had made the more pedestrian observation that he felt war with Iraq was coming.

Tenet is critical of Bush officials for going beyond the intelligence in several instances. There is Cheney's oft-criticized Veterans of Foreign Wars speech in August 2002. Cheney said, "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." But that is basically what the intelligence said too. A "key judgment" in the 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)—a consensus document of U.S. intelligence agencies—said "Baghdad has chemical and biological weapons." Cheney also said, "Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon." This is alarming, but so was the consensus conclusion of U.S. intelligence—that, if Saddam had to produce his own fissile material, he could get a nuke as soon as 2007 (i.e., now), and that, if he got fissile material from elsewhere, he could have a nuke within a year.

Given what we know now, of course, Cheney's statements circa 2002 appear reckless. But he wasn't talking in an environment in which U.S. forces had scoured Iraq for WMD and come up empty. His aggressive posture was partly in reaction to the first Gulf War, after which it was learned that U.S. intelligence had badly underestimated how close Saddam had come to building a nuclear weapon. "No doubt that experience had colored the vice president's view of U.S. intelligence gathering ever since," Tenet writes, "but it also had a profound impact on my views and those of many of our analysts. Given Saddam's proclivity for deception and denial, we, too, were haunted by the possibility that there was more going on than we could detect."

This is one of many passages in which Tenet is more fair-minded than in his book-promotion interviews. To conclude that Saddam wasn't pursuing WMD, Tenet writes, would have meant ignoring "years and years of intelligence that pointed in the direction of active programs." In the north of Iraq, a CIA team managed to interview Iraqi military officers prior to the war. According to Tenet, "Every military officer we debriefed told us that Saddam did indeed possess WMD."

ALEX WONG/GETTY

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Langley certainly wasn't doing the work of the neocons. Tenet had doubts about invading Iraq. An intelligence officer named Bob Walpole managed the production of the 2002 NIE and told Tenet, "I just don't believe in this war." Even adjusting for his self-interest in explaining away failure, Tenet's bottom-line judgment about the WMD intelligence sounds about right: "We got it wrong partly because the truth was so implausible."

Tenet tours the most notorious flubs of the Iraq intelligence, many of which have been spun into "Bush lies" by critics of the war.

Prior to the war, the administration argued that Saddam attempted to acquire 60,000 high-strength aluminum tubes for the enrichment of uranium. That turned out not to be the purpose of the tubes—but this wasn't deception on the administration's part. Tenet explains that the CIA believed the aluminum tubes were indeed for enriching uranium. And it had brought in a team of experts from Oak Ridge National Laboratory who reached the same conclusion.

The Department of Energy disagreed and thought the tubes were for rockets. But its representative at a meeting to consider the import of the tubes, according to Tenet, "was unable to explain the basis of his department's view in anything approaching a convincing manner." He adds, "Whatever their intended use, under UN sanctions, Saddam was prohibited from acquiring the tubes for any purpose. All agencies agreed that these tubes could be modified to make centrifuge rotors used in a nuclear program."

Then there was the brouhaha over Saddam's supposed attempt to acquire yellowcake from Niger. The case that Saddam was developing nuclear weapons didn't rest on this claim. "The Estimate noted that Saddam already had access to large amounts of yellowcake in Iraq—550 tons of it, enough to produce as many as 100 nuclear weapons," Tenet writes.

But yellowcake took on an outsized significance in the post-war debate. The CIA had told the White House to take the Niger claim out of the speech the president delivered in Cincinnati in October 2002. British intelligence had reported that Saddam tried to make the purchase, but the CIA was dubious. As Tenet puts it, "The allegation was worthy of investigation. Based on what we found, however, it was not worthy of inclusion in a presidential speech."

The claim made it into the 2003 State of the Union address anyway when the CIA reviewed the speech but didn't wave the White House off, and White House officials forgot that they had been warned about the information previously. This erupted into the scandal over the "16 words" that gave Joe Wilson his 15 well-coiffed minutes.

Wilson, of course, argued that he had made a trip to Niger that had definitively discredited the yellowcake claim. But his report had been so "inconclusive" that when the press began inquiring about it, the CIA "press office had trouble finding people who remembered the details." Wilson hadn't filed a written report, instead briefing two CIA analysts at his home over Chinese food. The report was such a non-event that it wasn't briefed to Cheney, and Tenet doesn't remember hearing about it at the time.

Iraq's relationship with al-Qaeda has been another perennial controversy. Critics argue the administration tried to imply Iraqi culpability for 9/11 by talking about Iraq and al-Qaeda in the same breath. The opposite seems closer to the truth: The critics dishonestly imply that because Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11, it also had nothing to do with al-Qaeda. Tenet stipulates that Iraq had "no authority, direction, or control" over al-Qaeda, but he counters the conventional wisdom that cooperation between the two was a fantasy.

According to Tenet, "There were, over a decade, a number of possible high-level contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda, through high-level and third-party intermediaries. Our data told us that at various points there were discussions of cooperation, safe haven, training, and reciprocal nonaggression." In the post-9/11 world, this was alarming, and it wasn't the worst of it: "There were solid reports from senior al Qaeda members that raised concerns about al Qaeda's enduring interest in acquiring chemical and biological expertise from Iraq."

In the end, all of the reasons we got the picture on Saddam's WMD wrong are cold comfort. We still got it wrong. But as Mario Loyola of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies recently emphasized, ultimately the responsibility rests with Saddam Hussein. It was his obligation to be transparent about his weapons programs, and so long as he wasn't, it would be difficult for us to get definitive proof of his programs or the lack of them.

We obviously could have done better. We needed more intelligence assets on the ground. A better intuitive sense of the way the Iraqi government worked (or didn't work) would have given the data context. Former U.N. weapons inspector Charles Duelfer, who headed the post-war hunt for Saddam's weapons, told Tenet that when he heard Colin Powell's presentation at the U.N., he knew half of it was wrong: "I just didn't know which half. With the Iraqis there was often some wacky, implausible, but true explanation for the way things seemed." And it would have helped if more people had been questioning the fundamental assumptions behind the intelligence, instead of almost everyone, with the White House farthest out front, pulling the same way.

There is a disturbing exchange between CIA officials and Condoleezza Rice near the end of 2002 in which she appears finally to understand that the CIA was producing *estimates*, not statements of fact, about Saddam's weapons programs. Making unmodulated pronouncements based on these kinds of estimates is very risky. This is a nuance that tended to get lost in the political debate, but also—less forgivably—lost by the CIA.

If the CIA wasn't going to emphasize the uncertain nature of the intelligence, who was? If Cheney went too far in his VFW speech, Tenet didn't even speak to him about it afterward. If the NIE turned out to be too unnuanced, as Tenet concedes, it was conservative compared with other CIA products. "We at CIA had written pieces in key publications, such as the President's Daily Brief, that were very assertive about Iraq's WMD programs," Tenet writes, and "much more assertive . . . than we had been in some of our other publications, including the NIE."

In the end, intelligence will rarely be perfect. And policymakers have to decide where to draw the inevitably nebulous line between the risk of action and inaction based on it. As Tenet writes of the war, "It was never a question of a known, imminent threat; it was about an unwillingness to risk surprise." Through his serial deceptions, Saddam pushed us beyond our willingness to risk surprise, and the rest is history. **NR**

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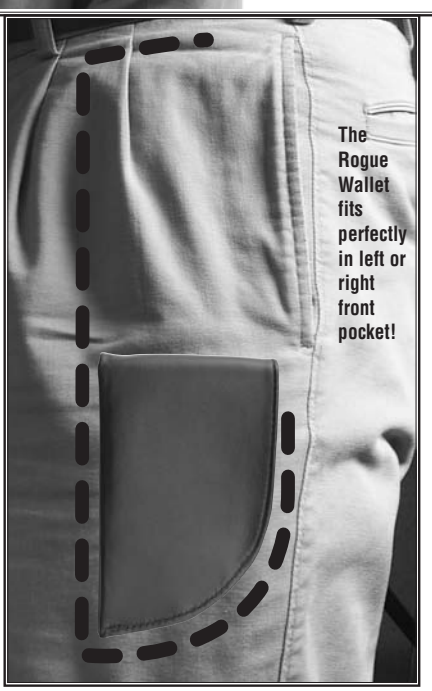
Pain in the back leads innovative businessman to create a new wallet design.

By John Fleming

When Michael Lyons visited his local chiropractor with severe lower back pain three years ago, he didn't expect the medical advice he was given: "Lose your wallet," his chiropractor told him. The doctor explained that sitting on a solid inch of plastic, leather, and paper over the years had contributed to his patient's back problems.

Skeptical at first, Lyons took his doctor's advice. After a week of sitting without a wallet in his back pocket, his lower back pain disappeared. But then a new problem arose—he still needed a way to carry his license, currency, and business cards around. Lyons looked at the wallets currently available and didn't like any of them. So he made one of his own.



After reviewing some 200 wallet patents, Lyons realized that every design was based on a traditional rectangular or square shape. He decided to try something else, and after testing various materials and different angles, he developed an ultra-thin, curved design that matched the contour of a pant's front pocket. Lyons took his "front-pocket wallet" prototype back to his chiropractor for advice. Lyons knew he had hit upon something big when his doctor immediately ordered a large number of wallets to sell to his clients. Based upon this feedback the Rogue Wallet Company was started. "While its shape is unique, it's real attribute is that it creates comfort by eliminating the ergonomic problems caused by sitting on a traditional wallet," claims Lyons.

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■ FRANCE

Go, Sarko!

If the new French president does not succeed, things will get horribly worse

THEODORE DALRYMPLE

THE French Revolution having taken place only two centuries previously, Chou En-lai famously remarked that it was too early to tell what its effects might be. A fortiori, it is too early only a few days after Nicolas Sarkozy's victory in the French election to say what that victory means. One thing is certain: It means something.

The rioters in the Place de la Bastille agreed. What they feared was that Sarko, as he is known to both his friends and his enemies, is in reality what he has all along presented himself as being, a man determined to change France. One of the ironies of the election was that the conservatives wanted change, while the liberals wanted everything to remain the same. And there is nothing like the prospect of change in France to spark a riot.

It is instructive to compare Sarko's dignified and decent statement after his election—that it was important for everyone to respect Ségolène Royal because millions of French people had voted for her—with the rioters' contorted faces of hatred. Like Mrs. Thatcher, Sarko evokes hatred completely disproportionate to anything he has done or might conceivably do. It is his ideas that are hated and feared more than the man himself.

Oddly enough for a man whose election immediately resulted in a riot, Sarko is what stands between France and real, serious social upheaval and violence. For if nothing changes, the situation will degrade further, until a much greater explosion becomes inevitable; and if Sarko cannot make the necessary changes, no one can.

The gravest social problem confronting France is that of young Muslim men of North African descent in the *banlieues*, the urban wastelands that surround many French towns and cities, particularly, of course, Paris. The nearest analogy that I can draw is to the townships of South Africa under apartheid, though the level of hatred is probably greater in France than it was in South Africa. Of course, the level of hatred is not necessarily proportionate to its justification, and clearly the French state is not remotely comparable with the South African; but many other factors lead to hatred, among them the absence of self-respect. When Sarkozy called the mob *la racaille*, they were angry because they knew he was right. No one likes to think he is totally expendable and likely to remain a parasite forever.

Nicolas Sarkozy

At the time of the 2005 riots, no one thought to ask the *women* of the *banlieues* what they thought: whether *les jeunes* were heroes or villains, oppressed or oppressors. The French state, in its response to the riots, made the elementary mistake of pressuring insurance companies to pay compensation (which they were not legally obliged to do) for the burned-out cars, thus missing an opportunity to create tension and opposition in the *banlieues* between the law-abiding and the law-breaking. If car owners are to be indemnified against arsonists, what reason have they for despising the arsonists?

Sarko is the first serious politician in France for a long time to understand that the enforcement of law is not authoritarian, but rather a precondition of freedom. This not-very-difficult thought has been unpopular among the French intelligentsia for a number of decades, and for several reasons, some of them understandable. French decolonization, from Madagascar to Vietnam to Algeria, was hideously violent; the memory of the *milice* during the Second World War still, justifiably, causes shame. But the fact that authority has sometimes, even often, been abused does not mean that there is no need for authority—that we can do without it. As anyone knows who has visited parts of towns or cities where the public authority has withdrawn or been pushed out, psychopaths rule; and it is the poor, not the rich, who are the victims of their criminality. Even in Clichy-sous-Bois, one of the worst areas of France, where all the trouble started in 2005, Sarko won 38 percent of the vote. I wouldn't mind betting that many more than half the 38 percent were women.

Allied to his insistence on the enforcement of law as a precondition of improvement in the *banlieues* is Sarko's belief in the urgent necessity of a more flexible labor market. Nothing integrates people like work, and any French plumber or carpenter will tell you why so many young people find it difficult to get a job in France: An employer is expected to be as much social worker as boss, and an employee, once hired, cannot be fired except with the greatest difficulty. Best, then, to avoid the difficulty and employ no one or as few people as possible.

Two days after Sarko's election, the unions threatened strikes if he tried to reform without their agreement. The problem is that they don't want any reforms. Their members like the situation in which one man's job is another man's unemployment, and in which it is possible to retire at the age of 50 on a generous

VINCE MAHER/WENN

Mr. Dalrymple is a retired prison psychiatrist and a contributing editor of *City Journal*. He is the author, most recently, of *Romancing Opiates: Pharmacological Lies and the Addiction Bureaucracy*.

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About Your Professor

Professor Arthur T. Benjamin is Professor of Mathematics at Harvey Mudd College, where he has taught since 1989. He earned a B.Sc. from Carnegie Mellon University in 1983 and a Ph.D. in Mathematical Sciences from Johns Hopkins University in 1989. The Mathematical Association of America honored him with regional and national awards for distinguished teaching in 1999 and 2000 and named him the George Pólya Lecturer for 2006–08.

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pension to be paid for by future generations (the French national debt has doubled under Chirac—*après lui, le déluge*). The language of general interest in the mouths of French trade unionists is a mask for group privilege.

Assuming that the forthcoming elections to the National Assembly do not hamstring Sarko from the outset of his presidency and saddle him with a government opposed to all his plans, there is no way, other than by doing nothing, in which he can avoid conflict with powerful sections of French society. France is a land of *fonctionnaires*, bureaucrats with the power to obstruct; of well-organized workers in vital services; of intellectuals virulently opposed to what they call "savage liberalism," that is to say economic competition of any kind; of farmers who depend upon subventions for their survival. All are prepared to go to the streets and create mayhem, block roads, and cause maximum inconvenience in defense of their collective privileges, whatever the national interest may be. Past French governments have always caved in to them and abandoned reform. It remains to be seen whether Sarko has the stamina for a real fight.

Without serious reform, however, the situation in the *banlieues* can only get worse—and even with reform, it is not guaranteed to get better. In 2005, *les jeunes* did not venture beyond the confines of the *banlieues* because they knew the fearsome CRS, the riot police, were waiting for them if they did. However, if they, *les jeunes*, ever thought they could overwhelm the forces of order, they might not hold back in the same way: and then the real violence would begin, and would make 2005 seem like a garden party.

For a foreigner, the curious thing about France is that it is but a hair's breadth away from the greatest prosperity. One legacy from *les trente glorieuses*, the 30 post-war years when France experienced rapid economic growth despite several humiliations abroad, is an excellent infrastructure. France's population appears notably more intelligent and better educated than, say, the British (which is not, of course, to say much). Its labor productivity is among the highest in the world. Many of its companies are the best run in Europe. France is the most visited country on earth, and more people want to visit it than anywhere else. There is no field of human endeavor in which the French have not excelled. These days, they even speak good English.

And yet nowhere is fear of the future greater than in France, or the feeling stronger or more prevalent that decline is inevitable and irreversible. Years of intellectual propaganda about the horrors of economic competition have sapped the faith of the French in their ability to compete without being pauperized. The very word "Anglo-Saxon" in French newspapers is shorthand for the kind of lawless Wild West society that they think reigns in Britain and, especially, the United States, where robber barons pay armed killers to wipe out the competition and thousands of people die daily on the streets from eminently treatable diseases. It is to this mindset that *les acquis*—collective privileges such as early retirement, endless sick pay, and subsidized vacations (all of which raise taxes to one of the highest levels in the Western world, and from the benefits of most of which the inhabitants of the *banlieues* are rigorously excluded)—seem so desirable and so worth fighting to preserve. If in the name of equality and social justice society is divided into castes with no mobility between them, then so be it.

There is no field of human endeavor in which the French have not excelled. And yet nowhere is fear of the future greater than in France.

Sarko has been called American in his attitudes, but has taken it as a compliment rather than as a criticism. His problem is that, without reform, France is headed for very serious violence, amounting almost to civil war; with reform, it is headed for serious, though temporary, conflict. But the reward of reform is that France would soon be one of the very richest countries in the world, as well as what it is now, the country with the highest per capita consumption of tranquillizers. **NR**

■ **BRITAIN**

Will There Always Be a Britain?

What Blair's 'devolution' hath wrought

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

One of the greatest achievements of the English has been the creation of Britain, an abstract political entity that permitted shared identity with their Celtic neighbors, the Scots and Welsh. (The Irish, more nationalistic and farther away, went down the alternative route of separateness.) This very year, the Acts of Union by which Scotland came to share sovereignty with England and Wales are 300 years old. They are the foundation of the United Kingdom, and the key to British successes from the Scottish Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution down to the former empire on which the sun never set.

Despite this astonishing release of creativity and energy, there is to be no official celebration of the Acts of Union. A contrary policy of empowering the Scots and Welsh operates instead. An election in Scotland has just given the Scottish Nationalist party a plurality in the Scottish parliament, though so narrowly that it needs a coalition if it is to govern. The leader of the SNP, Alex Salmond, is immensely wily, a survivor of many a bitter political battle, and he makes a program for the sovereign independence of Scotland sound plausible. The breakup of the United Kingdom, and therefore the obsolescence of Britain, is a distinct possibility.

Unlike Ireland, Scotland has no history of English oppression. Scottish nationalism is essentially a survival of the Romantic era, built upon images from Ossian and Sir Walter Scott, or the charge of the Scots Greys against the French at Waterloo with the war cry "Scotland forever!" The creation of a nationalist cause has been far from straightforward. In the mid 20th cen-

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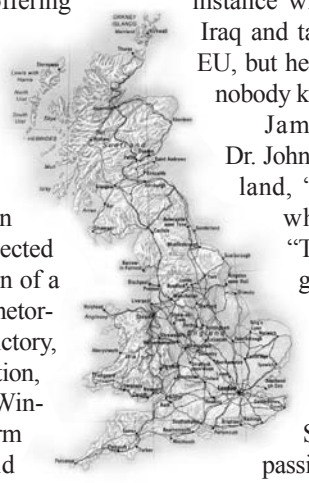
tury, some nationalists went so far as to commit treason by supporting Hitler; others were Communists. After the Second World War, the British Labour party managed to turn Scotland into a socialist republic, maladministered, often corrupt, with a demeaning dependency culture. Scottish Labour members of the British Parliament in Westminster were always more faithful to socialist ideology than to the nationalist cause. The SNP was able to build on a rising sense of grievance in the Scottish electorate on one hand, and on the other a prospect of change and renewal.

Mrs. Thatcher believed that the Scots were conservative at heart and one day would naturally rescue themselves from socialism, without any help or interference from her. Tony Blair set in place the different process of "devolution," with considerable legislative power allotted to a Scottish parliament in Edinburgh—and, for no very clear reason, rather less legislative power to a Welsh assembly in Cardiff. Furthermore, as the price for the end of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, he has devolved power to a parliament in Stormont, pressuring rival Catholic and Protestant gunmen into unholy alliance in government.

The declared purpose of devolution, according to Blair, was to bind the Celts into the Union by giving them enough self-government that they would never demand independence. His colleague and rival Gordon Brown, himself a Scot representing a Scottish constituency, concurred. Critics, led by Conservatives, maintained that devolution was the thin end of the wedge. The more self-government the Celts were granted, the more they were bound to demand. To be on the safe side, the Blair government instituted complex voting procedures in Edinburgh and Cardiff, including elements unknown to the English, such as proportional representation and party lists. Such trickery was evidently intended to prevent the local nationalists from ever having a majority. In the most recent election, over 100,000 spoiled votes revealed the extent to which Scottish voters were indeed bamboozled by the complexity of the balloting.

Quite probably, Blair had the further though undeclared purpose of shaping Britain to the requirements of the European Union. His deepest aspiration seems to have been to give Britain a leading role in the EU, but the reluctance of the British people to accept any such future thwarted him consistently. The EU is gradually but successfully breaking the component European nation-states into regions, each with its assembly—Spain, for instance, has a total of 19 parliaments, Germany almost as many, and even little Belgium has four. In the process, submerged nationalisms are resurfacing, each with grievances nursed immemorially. The Celtic nationalist movements all treat the EU as a mechanism for empowering them.

As luck would have it, the elections for the Scottish parliament and the Welsh assembly are among the very last events of the Blair era, a farewell offering that has the potential of overshadowing everything he has or has not done. Voted into office in 1997, he joins Margaret Thatcher in the select company of prime ministers who have served ten years. Great things were expected of him initially. "It is the dawn of a new era, is it not?" he asked rhetorically after his first electoral victory, promising reform, modernization, and a more decent society. Winning reelection for a third term just two years ago, he could have remained in office until 2010. But his new Labour party has come increasingly to resent his presidential style. The commitment of troops to Iraq and Afghanistan isolates him in a floodtide of defeatism and anti-Americanism. Several of his inner circle have been arrested on charges of selling titles (lordships, knighthoods) in return for party contributions, and the scandal laps too close for comfort. Exposed rather than disgraced, acting evidently against his will, Blair is due to announce his resignation within days of this writing.



Enter Gordon Brown. Journalistic legend has it that, over dinner in a trendy London restaurant as long ago as 1994, the two of them settled that Blair would lead the Labour party for an unspecified length of time and Brown would then succeed him. Throughout Blair's decade, Brown has been an impatient chancellor of the Exchequer. The supposed relationship between the two men has entertained the country, as commentators study their every word and their body language with Kremlinological zeal, detecting all manner of double-crossings and last-minute reconciliations.

Brown is formidable enough that nobody of stature dares to oppose him. Curiously in a party with avowed socialist principles, his succession in effect will be a coronation. But where Blair with his fixed grin tries to be all things to all men, Brown broods and bites his fingernails to the quick. Much given to praising himself in bombastic language, he also manages skillfully to be absent when blame is in the air. Critics have called him neurotic, a control freak, even a Stalinist. Rumor has it that he will reverse Blair's major policies, for instance withdrawing all troops from Iraq and taking his distance from the EU, but he keeps counsel so close that nobody knows what he really thinks.

James Boswell once said to Dr. Johnson that he came from Scotland, "but I cannot help it." To which Dr. Johnson replied, "That, sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." Son of a Presbyterian minister, Gordon Brown also cannot help being very much a Scot, but he is on record as a passionate advocate of the Union, defending Britishness in one speech after another, though not clearly distinguishing it from Englishness. He now has to engage his fellow Scot Alex Salmond in a political contest. Either Britishness remains valid or the United Kingdom will split into its nationalities, presumably in the manner of the Czechs and Slovaks, keeping the peace but losing the strength, the influence, and the historic identity that derive from union.

English nationalism is the unknown quantity. A minority of the English wish to be rid of the Scots in the certainty that the Scots will be poorer, even worse governed, and that years of schadenfreude at Scottish blundering and misfortune will be balm for the rejected English soul. A much larger number of people, probably the majority, resentfully ask what is known as the West Lothian question: Why do Scottish members of the Westminster Parliament have the right to vote (often determining legislation) on issues affecting England, when English members of that same Parliament have been deprived by devolution of the right to vote on issues affecting Scotland? With Brown as a Scottish-constituency

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member and prime minister to boot, the West Lothian question grows from a piquant anomaly to an issue with the potential to destroy him. As in the case of Iraq, a constitutional conference ought to be held to settle exactly how and where legislative powers are to be divided.

Independence for Scotland and Wales, or even disqualification of Scottish and Welsh votes in the Westminster Parliament on English issues, would give a permanent advantage to the Conservatives, virtually guaranteeing the extinction of socialism in England. Which is why Brown is likely to try to preserve his position by defeating Salmond through underhand tactics or masterly inactivity. In the circumstances, it is an act of generous and disinterested patriotism for the Conservatives to defend unequivocally the tried and tested Acts of Union, in spite of any short-term electoral detriment. Whichever way it comes out, the Blair legacy of ill-considered devolution looks set to give the Conservatives a genuine and deserved opportunity for revival—at last. **NR**

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■ TURKEY

Reforming Kemal

The nation's reasonable compromise on religion and politics

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

In his charming tourist history of modern Turkey, *A Fez of the Heart*, Jeremy Seal tells of visiting a small provincial museum in which pictures of a historic visit to the town by Kemal Ataturk 60 years before were proudly on display. What immediately struck him about the photographs was the astonishing variety of headgear that Ataturk had worn that one short day. One Western hat after another—fedora, trilby, homburg—was perched on the great man's head as he walked about the town to the wonderment of his subjects. Yet Ataturk was no male model, but a tough, hard-drinking soldier and Man of Destiny. So what was he up to?

He was, of course, giving the townspeople a beginner's course in Westernization. Kemal Ataturk created the modern Turkish Republic from out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. He modeled his creation on the latest European fashions in statecraft—the new Turkey was to be democratic, nationalist, progressive, and, above all, secular. But since the population of his new Republic was 98 percent Muslim, he had to effect a cultural revolution to ensure its secularism. He decided to expel Islam from the public sphere and to place religious observance under the control of a Ministry of Religious Affairs.

His cultural revolution devoted attention to quite small details. His endorsement of the trilby as the only fitting headgear for modern man, for instance, was designed to wean Turks away from such Islamic hats as the fez, which, being brimless, facilitated bowing to Mecca. This met with resistance from pious Muslims. Some were executed in 1930 for defiantly wearing it. Even today echoes of this old controversy can be heard in disputes about women's wearing of the Islamic headscarf on official occasions. And not all aspects of this culture war were trivial. The Ministry of Religious Affairs not only composes sermons for the mullahs to read each Friday; it also licenses (or, more commonly, refuses to license) the establishment of churches and seminaries for Christians and other religious groups.

Turkey's secularism, in other words, is not the separation of church and state on the American model but the control of religion by the secular state on matters large and small. It reflects a suspicion of religion as a divisive, anti-modern, and disruptive force—which is at least one reason why extreme modern secularists such as Christopher Hitchens regard the Kemalist Republic as a model for the Muslim world. It is, however, a fragile model: Nobody but a great national hero like Ataturk could have gotten away with stripping Islam from the public square.

Even he realized the fragility of his achievement by giving the Turkish armed forces the role of guarding Turkey's secular constitution against a revival of political Islam. They have performed that role well in the years since his death—several times intervening to protect secularism against Islamic political parties and then returning to barracks after the restoration of democracy. Outside the context of Turkish politics, this sounds like an apologia for military dictatorship. But there is little doubt that these earlier military interventions had the support of the political nation and the Kemalist political establishment—and only muted, grudging opposition from "political" Muslims.

That has now changed—and changed largely for good reasons. As Noel Malcolm reported in NR as early as 1995, Turkey developed rapidly in ways that undermined Kemalism and its imposed secularism. The country's rapid economic growth was creating a new entrepreneurial Muslim class. No longer was Turkey divided between Anatolian peasants and a ruling class of "white Turks" in the major cities. Muslim CEOs felt excluded from power by the Kemalist establishment—and their instrument in politics was a new Islamic party, the AKP (Justice and Development party).

Not coincidentally, the AKP's political advance has taken place against the back-

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ground of a revived Islamic sentiment throughout Turkey. Some of this is rooted in the reluctant acceptance by the Turkish state of the nation's ethnic diversity—including the existence of a Kurdish identity—which has had the incidental effect of reminding all ethnic groups of what identity unites them: Islam. Some is explained by the war in Bosnia, which aroused enormous sympathy and further heightened the general sense of an Islamic identity in Turkey. And some reflects the evolution of democracy from a Kemalist establishment game to a genuinely national activity in which all groups have an interest. In such circumstances the control of Islam by a secular Ministry and the exile from the agora of any expression of Islamic sentiment or loyalty began to seem as unrealistic as it was undemocratic.

These disparate trends found sinister expression in the rise of some Islamist groups close to jihadism. (A Turkish general complained bitterly to me seven years ago of America's lack of interest in Saudi financing of Islamist mosques.) It was not unreasonable for both Turks and Western observers like Hitchens to fear that the AKP—which won the 2002 general elections—might be the vehicle for such forces, a Trojan Horse smuggled into the Kemalist fortress to destroy secularism. But the record argues strongly, if not conclusively, that such fears are groundless.

The AKP is not an Islamist party on the model of Hamas. It is a socially conservative Muslim party not unlike the German Christian Democrats. During its period in power, it has made no moves towards establishing sharia law. Its strong support for entry into the EU is entirely inconsistent with an Islamist move towards sharia. If anything, the AKP has moved in the opposite direction, recently launching a campaign against honor killings. What is happening in Turkey is *not* a culture war between Western secularism and jihadist Islamism. Rather, the evolution of democracy and the spread of Islamic piety make it essential for Turkey to develop a more tolerant secularism that will permit the public expression of religious commitment.

Some external protection for Turkish democracy and moderate secularism must be found.

Why, then, is such a moderate and even inevitable development provoking the constitutional crisis currently gripping Turkey and alarming the West? The answer lies in the fears of the secularists rather than the plots of Islamists. Abdullah Gul, Turkey's foreign minister, was nominated for the post of Turkish president by his party. Until then the presidency was seen by Kemalists and other secularist Turks as a vital political safeguard against the AKP's political advance everywhere else. Accordingly, the Turkish army dropped heavy hints that they might mount a coup if Gul were elected. Massive "secularist" demonstrations took place in Istanbul (admittedly in a carnival atmosphere rather than an apocalyptic one). When the opposition withdrew from Parliament, depriving the AKP of a quorum for Gul's election, a relieved constitutional court declared any election void. Gul himself then prudently withdrew his candidacy, and new parliamentary elections were announced for July.

So Turkey is settling a potentially dangerous constitutional crisis in a sensible and stable way—by an election. That sensible settlement was helped along by the European Union's warning that a military coup would render the nation ineligible for EU membership. That intervention was timely and also significant. For the more tolerant secularism that Turkey needs might still require protection against both the army and Islamists. Entry into the EU with its well-established rules on religious liberty would fill the gap left by the withdrawal of Turkey's armed forces from the political arena.

It is far from certain, however, that Turkey will be admitted to the EU. Nicolas Sarkozy fears that Turkish entry is a synonym for unlimited Muslim immigration, and he's not the only European who holds that view. Until the EU question is settled, therefore, some other external protection for Turkish democracy and moderate secularism must be found. And since allowing Turkey to drift towards a military coup, and perhaps an anti-Western, nationalist orientation in foreign policy, would be a disaster, the U.S. needs to involve itself in this crisis. But how? And to do what?

In early May in Washington, President Bush and German chancellor Angela Merkel (the latter acting on behalf of the whole EU) agreed on moves towards a new transatlantic economic community that would embrace free trade and regulatory cooperation, but not free emigration. This opens up all sorts of possibilities. If non-EU countries in Europe were to be admitted to this vast new market and its accompanying institutions, any blow to Turkey resulting from postponed EU membership would be comfortably soothed by its membership in a better club—but a club with similar rules on democracy and secularism.

Jacques Chirac would have vetoed any such proposal on the grounds that the EU is intended to be a rival to the U.S. As America's new best friend in Europe, however, Sarkozy might help to solve the Turkish problem that he is helping to create. After all, if Turkey is an insoluble problem in either a purely Turkish or a purely European context . . . change the context. **NR**

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IRAQ VETS VICTIMS OF THE DRUG WAR

"Guys who wouldn't cry in a combat zone when their best friend was killed, they break down crying in front of me. And they tell me about all they can do now is bounce from job to job, drink, do drugs, and sit home contemplating suicide to end the pain."
– Cpl. Cloy Richards, USMC[1]

Our troops in Iraq have been fighting under conditions described as more dangerous and stressful than Viet Nam.[2] Many have served multiple tours. Ninety percent have been shot at or experienced bombings. Most know somebody who was wounded. One Army study showed that nearly a fifth of combat troops suffer Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).[3]

Incredibly, they can be dishonorably discharged for alcohol related misconduct or illegal drug use even though this self medication was directly related to combat stress. And with a dishonorable discharge, all benefits are cancelled – including treatment for PTSD.[4]

But if the symptoms develop after they come home they may be in for even more grief. The Veterans Administration has a backlog of 600,000 disability cases with an estimated 640,000 to come.[5] This unanticipated flood of casualties means that soldiers who don't have urgent and obvious physical symptoms will just have to get in line.

And while they're waiting for treatment, if they turn to booze or drugs to get through the nights of horror, the VA will often turn them away. Some VA outlets require veterans to be alcohol and drug free for six months before they get treatment.[6]

Failure to provide prompt treatment for all returning troops is an outrage that demands action by Congress.

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■ THE NATION

A Goddess For Victims

The Victims of Communism Memorial comes to fruition

JOHN J. MILLER

A DOZEN years ago, Lev Dobriansky and Lee Edwards met with National Park Service official John Parsons to learn what it takes to build a public memorial in Washington, D.C. Parsons gave them a document that outlined a 24-step program—a long march that included congressional permission, site selection, design approval, financial commitments, and actual construction. The ordeal required the involvement of three federal panels and a D.C. neighborhood board. As if the point weren't obvious, Parsons gave his visitors a crystal-clear warning as they headed for the door: "This is going to take longer than you think."

Today, Dobriansky and Edwards are about to complete the 24th step: At a dedication ceremony on June 12, the Victims of Communism Memorial finally will become a reality. It intends to honor the more than 100 million people who died in a terrible ideology's revolutions, wars, and purges—and it immediately will earn a spot on the must-see list of any conservative tourist who comes to the nation's capital.

The idea for the project came to Edwards—once an aide to Barry Goldwater and now a fellow at the Heritage Foundation—two months after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. "I was having Sunday brunch with my wife and one of my daughters," he says. "We were concerned that people didn't seem interested in discussing the crimes of Communism, and that a general amnesia was settling in everywhere." On a paper napkin, he jotted down "memorial—victims of communism" and stuffed it into his pocket. Before long, he was talking to his old friend Dobriansky, an ambassador during the Reagan administration, and together they approached allies in Congress. In 1993, President Clinton signed a bill authorizing a Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington.

The law stipulated that no federal dollars underwrite the project. The government merely would donate the land. Raising the cash would fall completely on the shoulders of Dobriansky and Edwards. Undaunted, they drew up grand plans for a $100 million museum, believing that the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum might serve as a model. Then they put out their shingle and waited for the money to roll in.

Except that it didn't. "We kept thinking that a billionaire would arrive and write us a huge check," says Edwards. By 1999, however, they were enjoying about as much success as one of the Soviet Union's five-year plans: The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation had raised less than half a million dollars. "We realized that we had to change our priorities," says Edwards.

They downsized their ambitions, setting aside the lofty goal of a big museum and choosing to focus almost exclusively on the construction of a $1 million memorial. Their board debated various designs, such as a replica of the Berlin Wall, a Gulag prison, or a boat used by Cuban or Vietnamese refugees. In the end, they decided to build a bronze statue inspired by the "Goddess of Democracy" erected by Chinese students at Tiananmen Square in 1989. It not only brought to mind a relatively recent example of Communist oppression—the massacre of pro-democracy protesters—but it also could serve as a useful reminder that even in the 21st century, the world's most populous nation remains unfree. Chinese diplomats expressed concerns about the design of the memorial to Bush administration officials, but to no avail.

From its toe to the tip of an upraised torch, the statue measures about ten feet—the goddess figure itself is just a bit taller than Yao Ming, the Chinese native and Houston Rockets center who is the tallest player in the NBA. The sculptor, Thomas Marsh, agreed to work for free. "When I saw the courage of those students at Tiananmen Square, I made a vow that I would try to rebuild their statue," he says. He produced a version that now stands in San Francisco's Chinatown and has prepared castings of it for other sites. The version that will appear in the Victims of Communism Memorial is an armature, which means that it's derived from his original but also contains unique qualities. "It's the biggest of the bunch and the facial features look more like the one the students made," says Marsh.

Despite agreement on the creative concept, Dobriansky, Edwards, and their supporters still needed to push through Washington's memorial bureaucracy. This is no simple task. The District of Columbia may seem cluttered with monuments of presidents, soldiers, and statesmen, but nowadays they're difficult to build because each one requires an act of Congress as well as approval from three different bodies, albeit with remarkably similar names: the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Memorial Commission, and the National Capital Planning Commission. The process is so cumbersome that only the best-organized initiatives survive. The last to succeed was a statue of Tomas Masaryk, the founding father of Czechoslovakia; it was dedicated along Embassy Row in 2003. "Besides the Victims of Communism Memorial, there won't be any this year and there may not be any next year," says Glenn DeMarr of the National Park Service. About ten are in the pipeline—everything from commemorations of Ike and MLK to the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

For the anti-Communist memorialists, the next question was where to put their statue. Edwards was determined to find a home for it on Capitol Hill. "We wanted it near the seat of government, in a place where tourists would see it," he says. At first he preferred a spot on Louisiana Avenue, next to the National Japanese American Memorial and across the street from the Robert A. Taft Memorial and Carillon, but the NCMC vetoed this idea. Then Edwards looked at a location on the other side of the Capitol, about a block behind the Supreme Court. The NCMC seemed agreeable. But then Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6C, a creature of D.C. government that has a say in such things, objected. Local residents complained about increased foot traffic, a lack of parking, and the loss of green space. So it was back to square one.

"When a door closes, a window opens," says Mary Katherine Lanzillotta, an architect with Hartman-Cox who advised the

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Racism in the Islamic World

How can peace prevail in the Middle East in the face of Islamic bigotry and hate? When will moderate Muslims speak out?

For years, the U.N., led by Islamic and Arab nations and their sympathizers, has accused Israel of racism, but the world consistently turns a blind eye to open, seething anti-Semitism in Islamic society.

What are the facts?

In one of the most astonishing propaganda coups ever, a United Nations conference on racism, which took place in Durban South Africa in 2001, declared that Zionism is racism. No wonder the U.S. and Israel walked out of the meeting, which was dominated by representatives of Islamic and Arab states and other anti-Israel forces, and whose conclusions were predictable from the outset.

The supreme irony of this conference was that it accused no other nation of racism—only Israel. In truth, Israel is perhaps the most racially and ethnically diverse and tolerant country in the world. More than half of Israel's Jewish population consists of people of color—blacks from Ethiopia and Yemen, as well as brown-skinned people from Morocco, Iran, Syria, Egypt and Israel itself. In addition, Israel's population includes more than one million Arabs, who enjoy the same civil rights as Jewish Israelis. In Israel hate speech is banned, and it is against the law to discriminate based on race or religion.

In contrast, anti-Semitism—a poisonous form of racism directed specifically against the Jewish people—is rampant in most all Islamic societies. Not only is anti-Semitism commonplace in Muslim nations, but it is propagated shamelessly by their leaders, in state-sponsored media, and by Muslim clergy.

For example, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed declared in a 2003 speech to the Organization of Islamic Conference that, "today Jews rule the world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them." Imagine if an American president had made a similarly sweeping and bigoted statement about blacks, Latinos or any other race—what a justifiable uproar, perhaps even an impeachment, would ensue. Yet there was no condemnation by the Muslim world of Mr. Mohamed's comments. Rather, virtually all of the conference's Muslim leaders actually voiced their approval.

In response to a terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia in May 2004, Crown Prince Abdullah declared that "Zionism is behind [these] terrorist actions in the kingdom." (Zionism is the code word often used by Islamic anti-Semites for Jews.) U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos called the Prince's assertion "an outrage . . . blatant hypocrisy," but Islamic leaders were silent. In fact, millions of Muslims still insist that Zionists were behind the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Anti-Semitism is expressed so freely and ubiquitously in most Islamic societies that no citizen can escape it. During Ramadan in 2002, Egypt's state-controlled TV aired "Horseman Without a Horse," a program based on the notorious forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in which Jews allegedly use the blood of non-Jews to make Passover matzot. In Iran, a TV series, "Zahra's Blue Eyes," portrays "Zionists" kidnapping Palestinian children and harvesting their organs.

> "Until Muslims reject racism in all forms, they can't expect Islam to enjoy full respect as a political and spiritual force."

Perhaps nowhere is the hatred of Jews more virulent than among the Palestinians. Most perniciously, Palestinian children are taught in school that Jews are descended from apes and pigs and that the most noble thing they can do is to kill Jews. Muslim clerics like Imam Ibrahim Madiras, an employee of the Palestinian Authority, declared in a 2005 television sermon, "Jews are a cancer" and later that, "Muslims will kill the Jews . . . [and] rejoice in Allah's victory." No surprise, then, that the 1982 doctoral dissertation of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas makes the astounding claim that "Zionists" collaborated with the Nazis to annihilate the Jewish people in order to drive the survivors to Palestine.

Anti-Semitism and the prospects for peace: Islamic anti-Semitism permeates the Arab Middle East and creates an atmosphere in which Jews are reviled and represented as subhuman. How can the Palestinian people embrace peace with a people represented by their religious and political leaders as dehumanized, evil beings? Even more importantly, how can Israel be expected to trust a so-called peace partner who expresses abject hatred and murderous intent toward Jews on a daily basis? Yet the U.S. and many European nations continue to demand that Israel make one-sided sacrifices for peace with a people steeped in racism and committed to its destruction.

Until Islamic leaders muster the integrity to relentlessly condemn anti-Semitism (and its evil twin, anti-Zionism), we can't expect Israel to accept a forced peace with the Palestinians. Likewise, until moderate Muslims reject racism in all forms, they can't expect Islam to enjoy full respect as a political and spiritual force among the world's people.

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memorial foundation. Edwards remembered a site in one of the small triangular "pocket parks" that line Massachusetts Avenue, which cuts a diagonal path through D.C.'s street grid. Just a few blocks from Union Station, at the intersection of New Jersey Avenue and G Street, it possesses a good view of the Capitol dome. Tens of thousands of cars pass by it each day, making it far more noticeable than either of the two earlier locations. Best of all, everybody was amenable: This was where the Victims of Communism Memorial would go. "In retrospect, I think it's better than the other sites," says Edwards.

Money remained a constant problem. Costs kept rising and the memorial foundation struggled to keep up. Plans for a water fountain or an "eternal flame" were nixed, as the focus of the project turned to the statue and a small plaza surrounding it. The foundation secured grants from several right-leaning philanthropies as well as the Pew Charitable Trusts. Companies such as Lockheed Martin, Pfizer, and Phillips International chipped in. The governments of Taiwan and several former Soviet-bloc countries anted up. A targeted mail campaign brought in more than a thousand donations, big and small. Vietnamese Americans formed an especially important constituency: On April 15, 70 performers appeared at a benefit concert in Orange County, Calif., that raised more than $100,000. "We need to educate people about the terror of Communism and continue to eradicate it from the world," says Anhthu Lu, a Virginia financial analyst who left Vietnam on a boat as a girl and joined the memorial foundation's board after reading about the project in a newspaper.

One of the most important contributions came from retired senator Jesse Helms, who was an original sponsor of legislation authorizing the memorial. From his nursing home in North Carolina, he signed a letter that inspired a gift of $25,000. "That letter was probably the last official communication of his political career," says John Dodd, head of the Jesse Helms Center at Wingate University. Alfred Regnery, publisher of *The American Spectator*, gave the memorial foundation a low-interest loan that helped it meet a funding deadline. Last September, the National Park Service issued a permit for construction to begin on the Massachusetts Avenue site.

At a groundbreaking ceremony last year, Paula Dobriansky—an undersecretary at the State Department and the daughter of Lev Dobriansky—delivered remarks. "The memorial that will rise on this ground, the Goddess of Democracy, is a universal symbol of freedom, representing in majestic form the rights and aspirations of all women and men," she said. "It reminds us that many still live under Communism—including close by, in our hemisphere."

'Goddess of Democracy,' Tiananmen Square

The next big speech on the memorial site may come from President Bush, who serves as honorary chairman of the memorial foundation. Edwards has invited Bush to speak at the unveiling on June 12, and so far the White House hasn't declined the offer.

It would, of course, be a fitting tribute for the president of the country that won the Cold War to show up and say a few words. But no matter whether Bush appears, this memorial, so long in coming, will stand far into the future as an enduring reminder of what Communism wrought. **NR**

VINCENT YU/AP

■ ESSAY

Islamists as Run-of-the-Mill Socialists

Or, what I learned at my Oxford Union debate

JONAH GOLDBERG

Last month, I participated in a debate at the Oxford Union. It was a delightful affair. I stayed in a lovely hotel. The debate was black tie, preceded by a cocktail party and a formal dinner with "freedom fries" on the menu (a nod to the visiting Americans in the last days before the Sarkozy Restoration). The whole place swarmed with comely British lasses in evening dresses and earnest, larval Tony Blairs eagerly calling me "sir." Everything was wonderful, except of course that I was there only because the Oxford Union was questioning whether my country should ever have been born. The proposition that night: "This House regrets the founding of the United States of America."

The other speakers taking my side were Peter Rodman, until recently an assistant secretary of defense, and Matt Frei, BBC's Washington correspondent. Our opponents included two prominent Islamists—Jamal Harwood, the chairman of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain, and David Pidcock, head of Britan's Islamic party. The head of the UK Communist party was supposed to debate as well, but he apparently chickened out for fear of losing. The irony of a Communist's being afraid to fight a lost cause seemed lost on just about everyone.

The forces of truth and light won the day. You can read a summary of all that, and a version of my remarks, at National Review Online. But there is an aspect of the debate worth revisiting. One of the most striking things about the Islamists' speeches was that they barely invoked Islam. Both men believe in imposing a worldwide caliphate where apostates would be put to death and Jews and

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Christians ghettoized. But they kept that stuff on the QT. Instead, Pidcock's indictment of America hinged largely on a string of conspiratorial non-sequiturs: George W. Bush's grandfather funded Hitler, the Napoleonic Code was 95 percent Islamic, and Woodrow Wilson, at the behest of oligarchic overlords, threw away the American Constitution when he created the Federal Reserve.

Harwood's speech was more serious, which makes sense in that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a serious—and dangerous—organization. His chief indictment was that America represents and champions individualism, and individualism is bad. Therefore, America is bad. Q.E.D. He cited America's high suicide rate as evidence of the dangers of runaway individualism. It was a curious metric, given that when Americans commit suicide they at least tend to do it by themselves. Islamists on the other hand like to take a great many people with them. This would seem to be one case where the American way is something to be celebrated.

As the vaporous indictments wafted up to the rafters in the Union's magisterial hall, I detected a familiar odor. Indeed, close inspection made it almost impossible not to draw the conclusion that this was the same nose-curling manure that has been wheelbarrowed into the Oxford Union for a century. Same S**t, Different Day, as the bumper sticker says.

These supposedly daunting Islamists were simply run-of-the-mill socialists. Or Marxists. Or fascists. Or whatever the fashionable name for collectivists is at a given moment. Spend a few minutes on the Islamic party's website and it quickly becomes clear that this is what H. G. Wells called "Gas, Water and School-Board Socialism" with a flattering hijab draped over it. Harwood's indictment seemed interesting because he was a fearsome "extremist." But had it come from an assistant editor at *Mother Jones*—and it certainly could have—it would have been a complete yawner.

It's a bit like an episode of *Seinfeld* where Jerry is excited to date a woman named "Donna Chang" he met by accident on the phone. He's jazzed because he thinks she's Asian. "I love Chinese women," Jerry says. George Costanza's mother is eager to take marriage counseling from the wise woman of the Orient. But then they find out that Chang is actually short for "Donna Changstein"—of the Long Island, not Shanghai, Changsteins. Jerry complains of "false advertising," and Mrs. Costanza cries, "I'm not taking advice from some girl from Long Island!"

Now I'm not saying Harwood and Pidcock aren't real Muslims, though it's revealing that they're both converts. But perhaps—just perhaps—these guys are like Jerry Seinfeld's dentist who converted to Judaism "for the jokes," and switched to Islam so they could spout indictments of usury and capitalism.

That's not a particularly novel insight. Many scholarly observers have chronicled how jihadism recycles all sorts of European intellectual trash. Osama bin Laden's version of the Crusades seems to have been lifted from a Marxist's salon. His understanding of American politics looks suspiciously cribbed from Michael Moore's op-eds. Sometimes it seems like Middle Eastern anti-Semitism is the result of poor Arab states' buying used Nazi textbooks off Amazon.com. And in Europe, Islamism appears to be this season's radical chic. Olivier Roy writes of Europe's radicalized Muslim youth: "They are 'born-again Muslims.' It's here that they are Islamicized. . . . Their dispute with the world isn't imported from the Middle East: It is truly modern, aimed against American imperialism, capitalism, etc. In other words, they occupy the same space that the proletarian left had thirty years ago, that *Action Directe* had twenty years ago. . . . They exist in a militant reality abandoned by the extreme left, where the young live only to destroy the system . . ."

The Islamists can't even come up with their own conspiracy theories. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is the only most glaring example of how even their paranoia is secondhand. Al-Qaeda is convinced that the Freemasons are out to get it. The Hamas Charter also warns about the Freemason (and Rotary Club) threat. Meanwhile, I learned from the Islamic party's website that Gordon Brown, Tony Blair's successor as British prime minister, attended the "Super Masonic One World Government Bilderberger Conference held at Baden-Baden" in 1991. I bet he got a great tote bag.

This is all encouraging for two reasons. First, once you realize that many of these people are simply Muslim Changsteins who adopt Islam as multicultural armor to protect themselves from ridicule, it becomes easier to criticize them. They aren't radical, inscrutable, and exotic "Others"; they're Fabian socialist losers who speak Arabic. I've long believed that our most underutilized "soft power" weapon against jihadism is mockery. We're afraid to use it because we need to maintain a deadly serious attitude toward the enemy while not seeming to make fun of our moderate Muslim allies. And, yes, we're also afraid of ginning up another Danish-cartoon rebellion. I understand the calculation. But we could still use a few more jokes about how Mohamed Atta was afraid a girl might touch his man-panties. And if they protest, make fun of them for that too.

Indeed, even the fact that Islamists are on the side of mass murder has its reassurances. Conservatives have long argued that socialism is oppressive and tyrannical by its very nature. Not all socialists are totalitarians, of course. But all totalitarians *must* be socialists. So when we see that Islamists have nothing to offer but the thin, recycled gruel of yesteryear, it confirms we're on the right side of history. I mean even the *Communist* knew that junk has no resale value. **NR**

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Wild about Harry

The 'netroots' love him, but will the Senate majority leader hurt his party?

BYRON YORK

In late April, the left-wing activist website DailyKos asked its readers to evaluate the performance of Senate majority leader Harry Reid. Nearly 22,000 so-called Kossacks voted, and the verdict was overwhelming: Almost 90 percent approved of Reid's work. "Sen. Reid, I love you," wrote one admirer, asking that Reid write something for DailyKos "so we can shower you with mojo & love."

At about the same time, the *Washington Post*'s David Broder, the longtime "dean" of the Washington press corps, issued his own evaluation of Reid's work. In an uncharacteristically biting column focused on Reid's comment that the war in Iraq "is lost," Broder called Reid a "continuing embarrassment thanks to his amateurish performance." A "long list" of senators, including some from Reid's Democratic caucus, Broder said, are ready for the majority leader's "exhibition of ineptitude to end."

It would be hard to find more telling examples of the two worlds of Harry Reid. On one hand, the far-flung "netroots," the loudest and most uncompromising force in Democratic politics today, love their "Give 'em hell Harry." On the other, Washington moderates, including some Democrats, are offended by his shoot-from-the-hip, gaffe-a-minute style. And there have been rumblings, not just from Broder, that Reid might be in trouble.

Is that true? Is Reid's "exhibition of ineptitude" about to end? Not by a long shot. In fact, interviews with Democrats across the ideological spectrum suggest that Reid is far more popular with his Democratic colleagues than some critics believe—or hope. After Broder's article appeared, all 50 of Reid's fellow Democratic senators wrote the *Post* to stand by their man. "In contrast to Mr. Broder's insinuations, we believe Mr. Reid is an extraordinary leader," the senators wrote, saying that Reid "has effectively guided the new Democratic majority through these first few months with skill and aplomb." Now, perhaps there were some senators who didn't quite believe that, who felt pressure to be on the team, but the majority of Democrats do indeed support Reid. The fact that any dissenters felt they had to publicly get in line suggests that, for now at least, Harry, Hero of the Netroots, is the man in charge.

The question for Republicans, stuck in the minority, is this: Is that a bad thing? Ever since last November's elections, the GOP has had a two-part strategy in the Senate. The first is to rely on Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell to hold the line against the Democratic majority. The other is to wait for Reid to overreach—or self-destruct. So far, at least, McConnell is holding up his end. As for Reid, talk to Senate insiders, and they'll point to four factors that could ultimately prove the majority leader's undoing.

HIS BLOGGER BUDDIES

"He has strengths," says one plugged-in Democratic strategist. "He has extraordinarily good relationships with his members. He can bring them together and keep them in line. But to the extent that he takes advice or is guided by the blogosphere, it's not only a huge liability, it's a significant problem for the caucus, because their views don't reflect the mainstream. The whole thing that happened with the Fox debate was f***ing lunacy."

The "whole thing" to which the strategist refers is a series of events that played out earlier this year in which Reid originally supported a Democratic presidential debate in his home state of Nevada sponsored by Fox News and then, after some not-so-subtle pressure from the lefty blogosphere, backed down completely. It began in February, when the Nevada Democratic party announced the debate would be held in Reno on August 14. "This is more great news for Nevada," Reid said in a statement. "I'm happy Fox News will be a partner for the August presidential debate."

Within a few days, bloggers were expressing outrage that Democrats would have anything to do with Fox News. "Does this mean that Air America will be hosting a Republican presidential debate?" asked Markos Moulitsas, founder of the DailyKos. "50 demerits for any Democrat who participates in a debate sponsored by the conservative machine's propaganda arm. Seriously. There's no need to further legitimize and enable the GOP's mouthpiece."

A few days later, the powerful netroots activist group MoveOn.org jumped on the issue, sending out a petition saying that Fox is a "right-wing mouthpiece like Rush Limbaugh and the Drudge Report—repeating false Republican talking points to smear Democrats." According to MoveOn, more than 265,000 people signed the petition. Moulitsas soon asked several Democratic campaigns whether they would take part in the Fox debate. The campaigns, he reported, were "conflicted" about the issue. Expanding on the veiled threat he had issued the week before, Moulitsas wrote that the Democratic candidates "could make things easier for themselves by just stating,

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en masse, that they won't do a Fox News debate . . ."

Within hours, John Edwards's deputy campaign manager, Jonathan Prince, sent an e-mail to Moulitsas announcing that Edwards would not participate in the Fox event. "Great job by the Edwards campaign," Moulitsas wrote, "showing real leadership on this issue." A day later, Moulitsas and a few other bloggers confronted Reid on a conference call. The bloggers pressed; Reid caved. "I don't like Fox News," he told them, maintaining that he had not had anything to do with choosing the network for the debate. Reid said he was reviewing the situation; within hours, the debate was canceled.

The bloggers rejoiced. But Reid's surrender dismayed some moderate Democrats. Why cut off the Democratic party from the biggest audience in cable television news? "Fox clearly caters to Republicans," says the Democratic strategist quoted above. "But a lot of [the audience] are not Republicans. A lot are swing voters or independents. To eliminate that channel of communication to that band of voters—when you do things like that, you tend to isolate yourself. That's not a way to reach out; it's a way to reach in."

HIS MOUTH

Sometimes that's an admirable quality, but sometimes it just reveals the unsavory side of Reid's political calculations. Consider four such moments from this April alone:

• In a news conference with Sen. Charles Schumer, chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, Reid could not conceal his happiness about the political advantages of American setbacks in Iraq. "We're going to pick up Senate seats as a result of this war," Reid said. "Senator Schumer has shown me numbers that are compelling and astounding."

• At another press conference, Reid said not only that the war in Iraq is lost, but that top administration officials know it. "Now, I believe myself that the secretary of state, secretary of defense—and you have to make your own decision as to what the president knows—[both believe] that this war is lost and that the surge is not accomplishing anything," Reid said.

• A few days earlier, responding to the Supreme Court's decision upholding Congress's ban on partial-birth abortion, Reid said, "A lot of us wish that Alito weren't there and O'Connor were there." His point seemed to be that he wished retired justice Sandra Day O'Connor were on the Court so the abortion ban would have been overturned. What Reid did not mention was that he himself had voted in favor the ban.

• Finally, in April, Reid called Vice President Dick Cheney an "attack dog."

Add those to Reid's greatest hits: In May 2005, he said of President Bush, "I think this guy is a loser." In December 2005, he gleefully declared that "we killed the Patriot Act" and also said that then–Senate majority leader Bill Frist had "no institutional integrity." In March 2005, he called then–Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan "one of the biggest political hacks we have in Washington." And in December 2004, Reid called Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas "an embarrassment" whose "opinions are poorly written.

Each of those statements has chipped away at Reid's credibility. But each has endeared him to his supporters on the Democratic left. When Reid says something outrageous, David Broder hears ineptitude. The netroots hear courage. And even mainstream Democrats say Reid is energizing an important segment of the party. "He has to speak up for the people who believe there hasn't been a voice of dissent on Capitol Hill," says Donna Brazile, the strategist who managed Al Gore's 2000 presidential campaign. "They're sick and tired of these Democratic leaders who had to bend over and bow down to the Republican majority. They want a leader to show some backbone."

HIS RECORD

During the last campaign, it was hard to go more than a minute or two without hearing Reid refer to "do-nothing Republicans" or the "do-nothing Republican Congress." At the same time, his fellow Democrats pushed their "Six for '06" agenda, which included a variety of poll-tested initiatives that party strategists felt would be relatively easy for the new majority to pass. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi pledged to do it within 100 legislative hours. Reid couldn't do that, given the slower pace of the Senate. But he did promise action.

It hasn't turned out that way, and Republicans are now trying out the "do-nothing" line on Reid. Playing on last year's theme, they're talking about the "Zero for Seven in '07" Democratic agenda. And it is indeed true that, after an initial flurry of legislative activity, the Democratic Congress has slowed down considerably. On three top areas of Democratic concern—lowering the interest rate on student loans, requiring the government to negotiate lower Medicare prescription-drug prices, and a comprehensive energy policy—the Senate has taken no action at all. On other main Democratic issues on which the House and Senate have both acted—raising the minimum wage, implementing 9/11 Commission recommendations, funding embryonic stem-cell research—Reid and Pelosi have not yet appointed conferees to work on final versions of the bills. Nothing has gotten done.

In addition, Reid has been much quicker on the trigger in using the majority's power to stifle dissent than Republicans before him. As of the end of April, Reid had filed 23 cloture motions, meaning motions to cut off debate. In the comparable period during the last Congress, Republicans had filed just seven such motions. In the Congress before that, after Republicans regained control of the Senate in the 2002 election, Republicans filed just six cloture motions—and almost all were attempts to stop Democratic filibusters of the president's judicial nominations.

"Many of [Reid's cloture motions] happened without negotiation, or very little negotiation," says one key Republican. "It shows a lack of willingness to negotiate. He files them almost immediately upon introduction of a bill."

Of course, Democrats would point to Republicans as the source of the problem. And it's true that if you're in the minority, you can prevent the majority from getting anything done and then condemn them for not doing anything. Reid, of all people, should know that game. But from the get-go, he has run the Senate in a more confrontational way than his GOP predecessors, and he shouldn't be surprised that he has run into opposition.

HIS ETHICS

Like many of his colleagues in the Senate, Reid has done pretty well for himself during his years in government. Last fall, before the election, when word got out that he had violated campaign laws by using $3,300 from his political war chest to give holiday tips

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to the staff tending his condominium at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington, nobody batted an eye at the accompanying news that Reid bought the condo in the swanky building for $750,000 in cash in 2001. (Reid repaid his campaign fund for the tips and no action was taken against him.) But other Reid real-estate transactions are causing critics to take notice.

In 1998, Reid bought a parcel of land outside Las Vegas for $400,000. It was zoned for residential use, but Reid asked the local government to re-zone it for commercial development. There was a fair amount of disagreement inside the zoning commission, but Reid finally got his way. He sold the land in 2004 for $1.1 million. Reid reported the sale and his $700,000 profit on Senate disclosure forms. But he did not report that, in 2001, three years before the sale, he had transferred ownership of the property to a private corporation that he had formed with a friend named Jay Brown, a lawyer who had sometimes been linked to (although never charged with) shady dealings in the Las Vegas gambling business.

Transferring the land to the corporation allowed Reid to keep his name out of property-tax and other transactions. No one has alleged that Reid committed any crime in the deal, but ethics watchdogs have asked why he wanted to remove his name from the property during the re-zoning negotiations. Reid didn't help things when he abruptly hung up on an Associated Press reporter who tried to ask him about it. And now there is another land deal, this one is Arizona, that is attracting scrutiny after reports that Reid paid a super-low price for residential land owned by a pension fund controlled by a friend.

None of these issues has turned into a serious problem for Reid, at least not yet. But he has been in the majority leader's office for just a few months. Last December, he hired Hollywood lawyer Martin Singer, who has represented such high-profile clients as Britney Spears, Bruce Willis, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, to handle questions about the Vegas land deal—a move that suggests Reid knows those questions aren't going away.

THE RIGHT KIND OF MAJORITY LEADER?

For the last few months, the *Wall Street Journal* and NBC News have been asking Americans, "Do you think the Democratic Congress has brought the right kind of change to the U.S.?" In January, 42 percent of those polled said yes, the Democrats have brought the right kind of change—as opposed to 15 percent who said Democrats have brought the wrong kind of change and 39 percent who said Democrats have brought no change.

Those numbers have changed dramatically during Reid's first months in power. By late April, just 20 percent said Democrats have brought the right kind of change. But the big news was that 60 percent said Democrats have brought no change at all.

There's no doubt that voters fired the Republican congressional leadership last November. But even Democratic strategists concede that firing Republicans isn't the same as hiring Democrats. That's the question Democrats face in 2008, and in the Senate they will run on their record under a leader who has put his foot in his mouth more times than he can count, who has allied himself with the angry left wing of his party, who has failed to move the Senate in any particular direction, and who has raised doubts about his own ethics.

God knows Republicans will have their problems in the coming campaign. But thanks to Harry Reid, they'll have a fighting chance. **NR**

■ **PUBLIC POLICY**

Against the Porkbusters

Conservatives should find another crusade

RAMESH PONNURU

On May 1, President Bush vetoed the emergency defense-funding bill that the Democratic Congress had passed. It was the second veto of his presidency. He listed three reasons for the veto. The bill "would mandate a rigid and artificial deadline for American troops to begin withdrawing from Iraq." It "would impose impossible conditions on our commanders in combat." And it "is loaded with billions of dollars in non-emergency spending that has nothing to do with fighting the war on terror."

By making that last point, Bush was echoing the concerns of congressional Republicans. He was also demonstrating that the campaign against pork-barrel spending has risen near the top of conservative causes, with potentially dangerous consequences.

Very little of the disputed spending in the bill qualifies as pork: It's not money "earmarked" for a specific project, such as a highway ramp in a particular place, at the behest of a congressman. Most of the $20 billion in non-defense spending concerns matters of policy: Congressional Democrats want more money spent on the children's health-insurance program than President Bush does, for example. But as the defense bill moved through Congress, Republicans rallied opposition by mocking pork. They said the Democrats were short-changing the troops while lavishing money on spinach growers, salmon fishers, and peanut farmers. The Heritage Foundation's memorandum on the bill was titled, "Congress Hijacks Troop Funding for Pork."

In March, 154 House Republicans—more than enough to sustain a veto—sent Bush a letter complaining about the "extraneous and excessive non-security related spending" in the bill: "If you choose to veto this measure over this spending, we will vote to sustain your veto."

What the congressmen were saying was that even if the Democrats acceded to Bush's demands and passed a bill to fund the troops with no strings attached, they would still support a veto because of the wasteful spending. Or to put it more bluntly: For these Republicans, fighting pork was more important than fighting the war.

A second veto based solely on pork would harm both our troops and the foreign policy they are carrying out. It would also be politically perilous. Having spent months complaining that the Democrats were making our troops wait for needed resources because of their political agenda, Republicans would be doing the exact same thing. If Democrats' passionate feelings about the war cannot justify withholding those resources, how can

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Republicans' passionate feelings about subsidies for salmon fisheries?

Cooler heads are likely to prevail. After the veto, Democratic congressional leaders started to back down on their foreign-policy demands. But the party's left wing, which thought the demands were too tepid from the start, will vote against a bill that retreats from them. So the Democrats will need some Republicans to vote for the defense bill in order to enact it, and to get them they will have to scale back the pork. That process has already started: Criticism forced the Democrats to abandon the peanut farmers and spinach growers before they passed the bill.

But the fact that so many Republicans have been willing to entertain the idea of such a veto—and some Republican leaders are still eager for a veto showdown—suggests crusaders against pork have lost all perspective. A certain lack of perspective may, indeed, be central to their campaign, which places an enormous amount of political energy in the service of trivial goals.

IMMOVABLE LIMITS

The "porkbusters," as some of them call themselves, face three immovable limits. The first limit is that the reforms they are pushing hardest won't do much to cut pork. The leading reform is transparency: The porkbusters want the public to be able to find out which legislator put which spending item in a bill. But most earmarks are not secret. Politicians brag about them. Citizens Against Government Waste, one of the oldest anti-pork organizations, complains on its website that pork "conditions voters to re-elect incumbents based on their ability to 'bring home the bacon.'" Exactly. If reformers really wanted to cut down on earmarks, they would outlaw disclosure: If politicians could not take credit for bringing federal money to their districts, they would bring a lot less.

More disclosure, on the other hand, could increase the number of earmarks. Congressmen send "request letters" to the appropriations committees seeking funding for their pet projects. From time to time, it has been suggested that these letters be made public. If they were, the congressmen would end up going to bat for every constituent who asked them for help.

The second limit is that, most of the time, getting rid of earmarks saves taxpayers no money. A lot of people who cheer on the porkbusters are under the impression that cutting a dollar of earmarks will yield a dollar of budget savings. In most cases, however, "earmarks" are congressional directives that federal agencies spend some of their allotted money in a specified way. If the money isn't earmarked, the agency is free to spend it as it sees fit. Federal spending stays at exactly the same level. Those porkbusters who understand this point have, alas, not gone out of their way to dispel popular confusion.

The defense-spending bill is a rare exception to the rule. The pork in that bill really would increase the federal budget. That's because the bill is an emergency bill outside the normal budget rules. If a congressman puts in a bit of agriculture spending to benefit the voters in his district, he frees up money in the regular agriculture-spending bill to be spent on something else. President Bush has said that he is willing to consider some of the non-defense spending in the bill, so long as it is resubmitted in a regular spending bill.

Getting rid of earmarks usually means that the executive branch, rather than Congress, will determine in detail how federal money is spent. Porkbusters claim that earmarks are conducive to corruption. Republican congressman Duke Cunningham, who took bribes in return for earmarks that benefited his bribers and went to jail for it, is Exhibit A. Some reformers have a touching faith in the integrity of the "competitive, merit-based" grants system at federal agencies, and perhaps it works just as well as advertised. How well would it work if people who wanted federal favors could no longer get them from Congress? The executive branch is not immune to corruption. David Safavian's corruption conviction in the Abramoff scandal is entirely the result of his work in the executive branch.

Most of the porkbusters are conservatives who want to reduce federal spending and eliminate unnecessary programs. Earmarks are a small part of that problem.

The third limit on how much the porkbusters can achieve is that earmarks are a small part of the federal budget. Citizens Against Government Waste estimates that in 2006 pork projects cost $29 billion. That's serious money, of course. But it's also only 1.1 percent of the $2.7 trillion that the federal government spent in total. Most of the porkbusters are conservatives who want to reduce federal spending and eliminate unnecessary programs. Earmarks are a small part of that problem.

ASKING FOR MORE

The best anti-porkers concede this point, but argue that earmarks indirectly boost federal spending in a number of ways. Republican senator Jim DeMint of South Carolina says that some congressmen vote for bloated spending bills because they contain earmarks for their districts: "The game . . . encouraged everyone to be asking for money and everyone to be voting for bills that were bigger than the budget that had been voted for earlier." Federal agencies, he adds, ask Congress for more money than they need, because they know that Congress will direct them to spend some of that money in ways they don't want.

It is certainly true, as DeMint says, that earmarks can buy support for government-expanding bills. But they can buy support for government-shrinking bills, too. The Clinton administration

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spread pork around liberally to secure congressional votes for the North American Free Trade Agreement, and most fiscal conservatives are glad it did. If earmarks have more often been used to grease the skids for statist legislation, it is not because of the nature of earmarks themselves; it's because of the overall orientation of Washington, D.C., over the last century.

One House Republican aide points to former congressman Pat Toomey as an example of the positive relationship between earmarks and federal spending. If he wanted to fight big spending bills, he had to resign himself to getting no earmarks from the House Appropriations Committee. That is an excellent reason for a principled conservative congressman to shun the "favor factory" that the committee has been called. But it is not the case that shutting down the factory, even if it could be done, would make many congressmen into Pat Toomeys.

It could, perhaps, be argued that by highlighting silly projects that congressmen have promoted for base reasons, the porkbusters are delegitimizing federal spending in general and thus making it easier to shrink the government. But that strategy would be dishonest. And it would probably not work: Three decades of inveighing against "waste, fraud, and abuse" in federal spending, and pretending that eliminating those evils would lighten our tax burden, have not brought federal spending down.

The campaign against earmarks could even have the perverse effect of making other federal spending seem benign. If conservative porkbusters persuade taxpayers that the federal government could afford to provide free health care for all if only it stopped wasting money, they will have done themselves no favors.

In February 2006, Congress enacted a budget that slowed the growth of entitlement spending by $40 billion over five years. That is far more savings than the anti-porkers are ever likely to achieve. It was a tough vote for Republicans to take. By and large, fiscal conservatives did not applaud them for doing it. They did not pay the matter a fraction of the attention they have given to pork. They certainly did nothing to encourage congressmen to get into the habit of reining in entitlements.

Citizens Against Government Waste, on its website, makes another argument against pork. "Earmarks add to the national debt by acting as the gateway drug to Congress's spending addiction. Pork-barrel spending allows politicians to target benefits to specific groups at taxpayers' expense. That vote-buying mentality spills over into other areas of the budget, like entitlements, leading to higher overall spending."

In the late, decadent phase of the Republican Congress, you could see something like this at work. Congressmen had decided to get reelected by spending money on their districts rather than advancing conservative reforms. But let's not confuse cause and effect. The appetite for conservative reform died first, and then congressmen relied on incumbency and pork for their reelection in the absence of a reformist agenda.

The porkbusters might be able to do some very modest good. But hostility to earmarks has become a much larger cause for conservatives than it ought to be. If conservatives succeed in rooting out earmarks, their victory will mostly be symbolic. And to adapt Flannery O'Connor: If it's just symbolism, then to hell with it. **NR**

■ AT WAR II

Start of the Surge

A report from Iraq

BING WEST

Baghdad

DURING this month-long visit, I have accompanied twelve Iraqi and American units in Anbar Province (including Habbaniyah, Haditha, Ramadi, Saqwaniyah, and the Zidon) and Baghdad (including Rusafa, Sadr City, Azamiyiah, Khalidiah, and Ghazaliyah). I have visited these areas many times since 2003, and it appears to me that, in both Anbar and Baghdad, the war-fighting strategies are now sound and clear.

This should not be taken for granted; the U.S. strategy in Iraq has been erratic. Iraq's 26 million traumatized inhabitants have few leaders, are rent by religious and ethnic antagonisms, and are slaughtered and terrified by the Grendel-like monster called al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). The reasonable timeline for counterinsurgency and nation-building under such conditions is ten to twenty years. The administration and the Pentagon envisioned completing "full-spectrum counterinsurgency"—i.e., clearing, holding, and rebuilding the key cities—in 2005; transitioning to Iraqi forces in 2006; and pulling out in 2007. If accomplished, that would have been the fastest turnaround in history.

As everyone knows, it was *not* accomplished. In 2006, as U.S. troops withdrew from the streets into large bases, Baghdad fell apart when bombings by Sunni extremists provoked the Shiite Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) militia to a murder campaign to drive all Sunnis from the capital. In response, President Bush has now deployed five brigades into and around Baghdad, and a new commander, Gen. David Petraeus, has implemented a "Surge Strategy"—one based on classic counterinsurgency principles. American companies are now deployed throughout the city in concert with Iraqi police and soldiers.

BIG MO

The new American military team has infused the effort with energy and strategic clarity, and seized the initiative. In this war, the moral/psychological element outweighs the physical by 20 to 1. And on the two primary battlefields—Anbar and Baghdad—I see a common characteristic: U.S. momentum.

In Anbar, the unknown is whether the government in Baghdad, especially the Ministry of Interior, will provide the resources to reinforce the unexpected success. In Baghdad, the unknown is whether the Maliki government will eventually tolerate a JAM resumption of sectarian cleansing. The surge, after all, is based on borrowed forces: The U.S. troops were "borrowed" by a (final?) drawing upon the good will of the American electorate, and the Iraqi troops were borrowed from the Kurds and from Anbar, both

Mr. West, a former Marine and former assistant secretary of defense, is writing his third book on the Iraq War.

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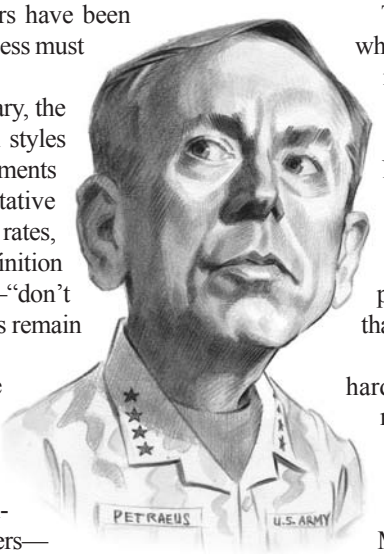
of which will reclaim them. Thus, at the end of the surge, Baghdad will have to maintain stability with fewer American and Iraqi forces. On both battlefronts, American rifle companies are the steel rods in concrete that is just beginning to harden.

When I mentioned that the Americans would be leaving, residents in both Sunni and Shiite areas responded by saying, stay in our neighborhood a little longer. The key now is to transfer that trust to Iraqi army and police officers; the goal in every district should be an acceptable level of trust between the community and the local Iraqi security commander.

In Baghdad, the police—distrusted and primarily manning checkpoints—will remain secondary to the Iraqi army as a stabilizing force. The local effectiveness of the army is dependent upon the battalion commander and one or two aggressive company commanders. The Americans on the scene know who the bad apples are that must be replaced. One three-star Iraqi general, two division commanders, and several battalion commanders have been relieved because of American pressure. That process must continue.

Because urban policing is foreign to our military, the result is a variation of methods and operational styles that one would not see among, say, police departments in the U.S. We lack generally accepted quantitative standards or criteria, such as arrests or clearance rates, by which to measure achievement. Even the definition of "patrol" is elastic. Despite Petraeus's dictum—"don't commute to work"—too many American soldiers remain wedded to their Humvees.

Nonetheless, violence is on the decrease; more troops do tend to reduce criminal activity. There is the trustworthy judgment of American company commanders—the "I know it when I see it" factor—in evaluating security in a neighborhood. Wherever I go, the company commanders—most on their second tours—give candid, gritty assessments of conditions in their battle space. What is occurring in Baghdad is training by example: The offensive tempo and attitude of American units are being copied by Iraqi units.



Gen. David Petraeus

Assuming security continues to improve, how can it be sustained as U.S. units leave? The burden will shift to a U.S. advisory corps that will encourage a nonsectarian, on-the-offense attitude in Iraqi battalions, without the comfort of a "partnered" American battalion. The adviser is the coach who knows whether the unit is doing its job. He's in a tough spot; but it can be a highly rewarding one, if approached with the right attitude.

By 2008, these advisers will be the glue holding the stability gains together. The adviser-team leaders will be chosen this summer. To entice the best, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps must offer commensurate incentives. This is an old sore point within these services—neither of which is doing enough to place its top talent in the adviser ranks.

As for the Iraqi army, at the battalion level—and in many police units—it is advancing at an acceptable pace. It's the performance at the national level that is unacceptable. The heart of the problem is that Iraqi society is extraordinarily hierarchical, and the top level is failing. The Shiites govern defensively and reactively, as if they expect to be stripped of their power (power they now have owing to their majority of the Iraqi population). The government ministries do lack competence, because of the dismissal of the experienced Baathists and the flight of the educated class from Iraq; but this deficit can be overcome through the activism of advisers and American logistic skills. (Today, for example, many U.S. advisers are supervising the payrolls of Iraqi battalions and police.)

Advisers cannot, however, compensate for determined sectarianism or corrosive obduracy. Iraqi army officers who do not hesitate to arrest Shiite militia are too frequently relieved of command and shifted to other duties. It is no secret which ministries and personalities have obstructed too often to be tolerated. Some senior people simply have to be removed from power. Of the top 150 Iraqi political, ministerial, and military leaders, perhaps 25 percent should be dismissed. It is not yet clear whether the State Department will dispatch a team of tough diplomats with the mission of ousting those Iraqi officials who are working against their nation's interests.

The American tendency has been to try to prevail while tolerating malfeasance within the Iraqi senior ranks. This has been defended on grounds of *Realpolitik*—but in actuality, we cannot excuse our inaction by claiming that Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki lacks power, when the political system we imposed was designed specifically to prevent any prime minister from amassing power. Countering an insurgency without the ability to promote the competent and fire the disloyal is more than an uphill battle.

Maliki's dilemma is obvious. The more he purges hardcore Shiites from the ministries, the more he risks a vote of no confidence in the Assembly, or removal from office. If he does little or nothing, President Bush has (allegedly) threatened to remove him. To balance these opposing tensions, Maliki of late has stood to the side and let Petraeus and his tough deputy, Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, apply the hammer to Shiite as well as Sunni extremists.

It is U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker's job to persuade Maliki to dismiss the non-performers inside the ministries; it is General Petraeus's job to demonstrate real progress in the actual war.

ROAD TO SUCCESS

In a nutshell, for the U.S. to achieve the goal of relative stability in Iraq, three battlefield conditions must be met by the end of 2007. First, Iraq's predominantly Shiite army must demonstrate a strategy and a momentum against a resumption of Shiite ethnic cleansing in and around Baghdad. Second, in Anbar, the Iraqi army and the predominantly Sunni police must sustain the momentum for eradicating AQI. Third, in the rest of the Sunni Triangle, the Iraqi army must prevent al-Qaeda from developing sanctuaries.

The strategy itself is clear enough. The allied forces will try to 1) bring security to the population by placing American and Iraqi forces in every neighborhood; 2) peel away the irreconcilables—prominently, AQI and JAM death squads—by shooting or imprisoning them; and 3) reconcile the majority of Sunni insurgents and Shiite militia through government reforms, compromise, and legislation.

While passing specific national legislation—such as the hydrocarbon law on oil production—will provide assurances of national

DARREN GYGI

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unity and a fair distribution of revenues, such laws may not motivate many insurgents and militia to desist. Local deals will be necessary, and they are more likely among the Shiite militia than among the Sunni insurgent groups (which lack a defined home base). To date, the insurgent leaders who claim to be "the honorable resistance" have made absurd demands—which suggests that productive negotiations will be possible only after Coalition victories on the battlefield. If previous insurgencies are a guide, guerrillas accept political terms only when losing.

Regardless of negotiations and legislation, the irreconcilable Sunni insurgents and Shiite militia must be killed or captured. And there's a big problem here: The number of insurgents being killed is low. Iraq, especially Baghdad, is not a shooting war, it's a police war; and police keep order by arrests, not by shootings. Since the Surge Strategy began, U.S. and Iraqi forces have been imprisoning more detainees. As a result, the American and Iraqi prisons are stuffed full, and there are no plans to build more immediate capacity proportionate to the scale of the war. Some Iraqi and U.S. officials favor a mass release of several thousand prisoners, but it makes no sense to release those who will kill you.

Most of the prisoners come from Anbar Province, where the outlook has improved owing to years of persistent effort in fighting, an increase in forces, and the swing of the tribes. Just a year ago, the Sunnis in Anbar were afraid of AQI, yet hoping to regain the power they had enjoyed under Saddam. For years, I had watched American commanders warn the sheiks and local councils that one day the Americans would be gone and al-Qaeda would rule, unless they stood up. Now some of the tribes are doing so, and Sunni recruits are joining the police. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Interior—even though it has adequate money—will not release the funds to hire more police in Anbar and to reinforce success on the ground. The MoI deserves to be neutered; its prejudice against Sunni Anbar is hurting the war effort.

In Anbar, terror coexists with progress. In Habbaniyah, I watched a father refuse treatment for his son, saying he would be killed if he accepted medical help from the Americans. In Haditha, residents who are now secure insisted to me that if the Marines left, AQI would return to rout the police. In Fallujah, city leaders are routinely assassinated and Iraqi forces have stopped patrolling the western end of the city. Although the tribes are now opposed to AQI, what is called the Murder and Intimidation (M&I) strategy of AQI is still flourishing.

A major reason for this spotty record on security is that Iraqi forces are instinctive raiders: They prefer defensive strong points from which to sally forth in large numbers against fixed targets. Patrolling in small numbers to hold neighborhoods where they have no relatives—in other words, securing the population the American way—does not come naturally.

In addition, the American emphasis on force protection has diminished risk-taking by Iraqi forces. Four armored Humvees are required for each U.S. patrol; every soldier and Marine wears layers of protective armor; and so on. This has conveyed a message to the Iraqi forces: Casualties are to be avoided. When human life is held equally dear but one ally invests ten times the capital, then the ally with fewer resources adopts more conservative tactics to balance the scales—e.g., not patrolling in areas where there are snipers.

They cannot fight the war the way Americans do. Yet the more they patrol with Americans, the more they become accustomed to a style and to a supporting logistics tail they cannot duplicate. The solution is not to believe that the Iraqis will patrol like Americans when left on their own in a year or so. Instead, the Marines in Anbar want to add recruits to the Iraqi army and police, and to pay for associates like the tribal forces and let them do what comes naturally: prevail by hugely greater numbers at the point of attack.

In Anbar today, there are about 18,000 Iraqi and 33,000 Coalition forces. Given the vast distances and an insurgency that numbers over 10,000, several officers suggested to me a goal of 40,000 Iraqi soldiers and police by the end of 2008. The Marines have so developed their linkages with the tribes that such numbers are credible. The problem is the passivity of the ministries in Baghdad, especially the Ministry of Interior: They are not providing the resources they have at hand. The officers I have spoken with suggest that, in the absence of a major increase in the numbers of paid Iraqi security forces in Anbar, there will be a need for company-sized operations—launched by highly mobile U.S. battalions—for years to come.

THE OUTLOOK

The Surge Strategy and top American leadership have certainly infused a new sense of momentum. I've read about our army being "broken," and certainly at least a year at home—what's called "dwell time"—is deserved by every unit that is called upon to redeploy. But I have been out with enough different units to attest to the energy and focus of our troops. These are good guys who understand the strategy Petraeus has laid out. The core of our strength lies in our battalions, and at that level the new momentum has positively affected the performance of the Iraqi battalions and the police.

The Iraqi top remains weaker than the bottom. The biggest challenge is at the upper level of the Iraqi government, including the National Assembly. It remains uncertain whether the higher ranks can rise above the concept that seniority means privilege, and whether they can reach a compromise with the Sunnis.

I am surprised by how frequently both Iraqi officials and American officers tell me that Iran is waging a proxy war against the U.S. The press—probably in reaction to its having accepted in 2002 some intelligence assessments about Iraq that proved false—has bent over backward not to link the central government of Iran with explosive devices, money transfers, and Iranian agents active inside Iraq. It walks and quacks like a duck, but none dares call it a duck. Whatever the extent of its influence—through payments, weapons, and moral support to the extremists—Iran is widely perceived as a malign influence, with the U.S. playing defense.

As for AQI, it must be beaten psychologically. Both JAM and AQI prey on the weak. They don't fight each other or the Iraqi army. The Iraqis in special-forces units scorn AQI and literally chase them down during night raids. The Iraqi soldiers don't express any particular fear of them. Yet AQI has a mystique of ferocity among the people, too many of whom believe AQI zealotry will overwhelm the Iraqi security forces. The Iraqi army must break that mystique by picking fights, by venturing into areas like the Zidon south of Fallujah, by publicly mocking and humiliating AQI, and by smashing it. The AQI fighters are mean bastards, but they can be broken. They have to be put away permanently when caught, or put in the earth. **NR**

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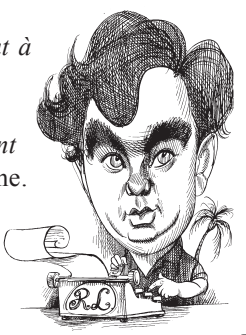
the long view

ROB LONG

Department of Homeland Security

Cellular-communication wiretap extract:

TARGET: "Allo? Who is thees, please?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Sarko? Sarko, it's George Bush."
TARGET: "Oh, oui. Yes. Allo, Mister *le Président*."
POTUS: "Back at ya, Mr. President. Congrats, Sarko. Fabulous, fabulous victory. Really."
TARGET: "Yes, well. It had the elements of the essential human crisis. Ultimately, it became a battle between a nihilist and an absurd clown."
POTUS: "Um. Right."
TARGET: "With me being the absurd clown, *bien sûr*."
POTUS: "Gotcha. Anyways. Just wanted to reach out and say 'hey' and tell you how happy I am that France and America are getting back to being friends."
TARGET: "You know, Mister *le Président*, we are not so different. I often think of the loneliness of the open spaces that your country has—I think primarily of the magnificent sadness of *Aree-zona* or *Wee-ohming* and I would say that France, too, has her magnificent and wonderful sadness."
POTUS: "Right. Right. Think that myself sometimes. But if we could maybe have some kind of new thinking on Iraq, that would—"
TARGET: "As I was saying to my lover last night, as I was leaving her to return to my wife, I said to her that the stupidity and meaninglessness of philosophy can be mirrored in the *terroir* of a place, and that for man to find purpose in life, he must also grasp the concept of non-purpose, correct?"
POTUS: "Hmmm? Oh, sure, yeah. Yeah. But if we could get back to Iraq—"
TARGET: "My lover laughed sadly. She is depressed. She has just recently lost election to the presidency of France."
POTUS: "Wait. What?"
TARGET: "My lover. She is the other candidate."
POTUS: "Wait. Your girlfriend was the gal who ran against you?"
TARGET: "But of course."
[clicks on the line]
TARGET: "Eh, yes, *pardon*, *monsieur le président*, I have—how do you say?—another call coming in. May I ask, *s'il te plaît*, for you to hold the line?"
POTUS: "I can call back if it's more convenient."
TARGET: "Would you? That helps me."
POTUS: "Sure, how about in an hour I—"
TARGET: "*Formidable! A tout à l'heure!*"
[clicks on the line]
TARGET: "Allo! The *président de la République* on the line. How may I help you?"
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "Congratulations, Mr. President."
TARGET: "Yes, yes, I know."
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "Both Bill and I send you our very best wishes, and hope that we can meet soon."
TARGET: "Yes, yes, I know."
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "I was wondering, if you have a moment, if we could talk a bit about the relationship between our two countries?"
TARGET: "Of course. Who is thees?"
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "This is Senator Hillary Clinton."
TARGET: "Oh! *Oh!* I am so sorry. I apologize. I thought perhaps for a moment that you were a past lover, reaching across the years to tell me in a rueful voice resigned to the passage of time that our faded *passion* means more to you in the decay of it, in the death of it, than it did when in full flower."
SENATOR CLINTON: "I was really just calling to talk politics."
TARGET: "Yes, yes, of course. But perhaps if you fixed your hair a bit?"
SENATOR CLINTON: "Excuse me?"
TARGET: "You have what we call a 'private twinkling.' A bitterness I find quite magnetic. Shall we explore that bitterness?"
SENATOR CLINTON: "I'm not sure I follow you."
TARGET: "And I am not sure that you are not sure."
[clicks on the line]
TARGET: "Don't go anywhere. I have another call. Let me get rid of it."
SENATOR CLINTON: "But—"
[clicks on the line]
TARGET: "Yes, yes. Who is thees now?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "President Sarkozy? This is Governor Bill Richardson. I'm calling to offer my congratulations—"
TARGET: "Yes, okay, many thanks to you. I have someone on the other line."
GOVERNOR RICHARDSON: "Well, I was hoping, sir, we could talk a bit about Franco-American relations?"
TARGET: "*Non!* Later! I have a call."
[clicks on the line]
TARGET: "Allo?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: "Mr. President, this is Senator Barack Obama."
TARGET: "Ah! *Monsieur Obama!* This is a pleasure. I was just talking to my lover—not the candidate, but the other one—about you, and she and I both agreed that you have a very tragic face."
SENATOR OBAMA: "Um. Okay. I just called to congratulate you."
TARGET: "Yes, yes. Of course you did. I am a very big jazz fan."
SENATOR OBAMA: "Great. Anyway, I hope that relations between our two countries can improve over time."
TARGET: "If only we knew what 'time' really meant, yes?"
SENATOR OBAMA: "Not sure I know what you mean."
TARGET: "I think that, yes, our two countries need to become closer. We are not that different, after all."
[clicks on the line]
TARGET: "And now I must go. My wife is on the other line. She and her lover are dining tonight with me and my lover."
[clicks on the line]



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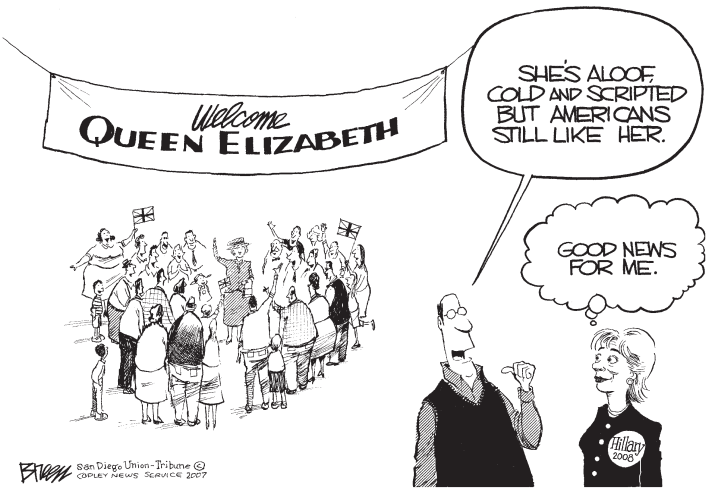
HELP !!!!

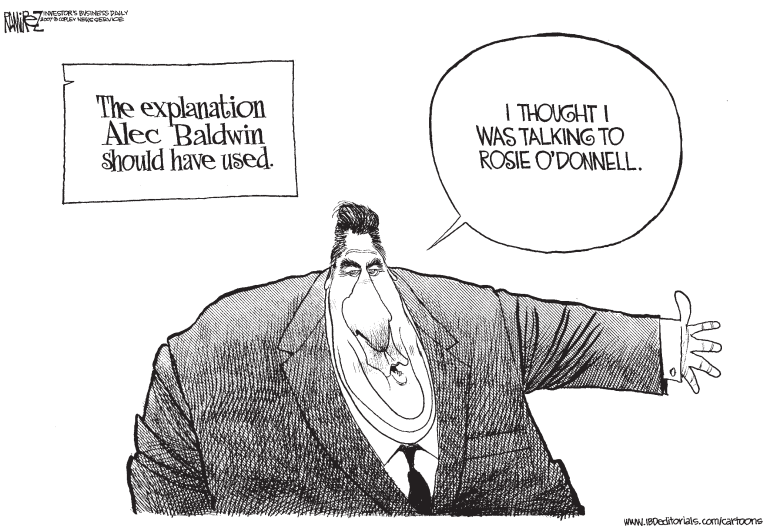
Give McCain a Sedative

Once more aboard the straight-talk bus
Looking like risen Lazarus
(Hey, just a tad), McCain's begun
Having at Bush. John's still on "stun,"
But primaries are where the base—
I've seen their eyes—decide a race,
A factoid, I'm just guessing, that's
The reason he's been going bats.

—W. H. von Dreele

"Oh, I'm unemployed—but it's not as exciting as it sounds."

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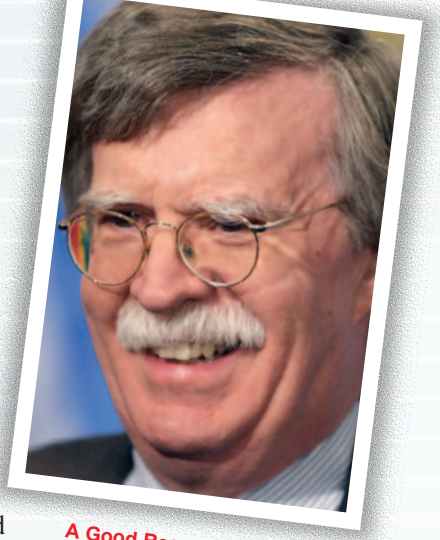

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Thur./Aug. 2	Sitka, AK	8:00AM	5:00PM	late-night poolside smoker
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the bent pin

FLORENCE KING

Father of the Year?

THE only thing about Alec Baldwin's tirade I don't understand is that everybody keeps calling it a "voicemail." Is that the same thing as what I call an "answering-machine message"? I am not offended by the way he spoke to his daughter, it's just that I have Luddite tendencies and want to know if the Upgraders have been going behind my back again.

Some things should never be upgraded, and one of them is a fire-breathing father who gives his erring daughter what used to be called "a good talking-to." Unhappily, this once universal family event has already been so relentlessly upgraded that fathers have gone the way of the 300-baud modem, regarded as quaint at best, mocked and scorned by the one-gender-fits-all zealots of Wireless Parenting.

Whatever we may think of Alec Baldwin's leftist politics, the ironic fact remains that his current troubles have found him holding a traditionalist fort virtually alone. The moment America heard him call his daughter "a rude, thoughtless little pig" he was transformed into the universally condemned Angry White Male, liberalism's quintessential spoiler whose anger, whiteness, and maleness have for decades been associated with conservative father figures. From feminism's catch-all patriarchy to Big Daddy in his many incarnations to Paul Newman's line in *The Long, Hot Summer*—"The world belongs to the meat-eaters"—the Angry White Male has been first and foremost a father.

Until now. We have finally managed to separate them by inventing the male parent. To remove all anger and hierarchy from *father* we avoid the very word, preferring "my dad" even in formal political addresses. The last time it was widely used—and then only as a buzzword—was in the '70s, when men were urged to discover their softer side and show their emotions, which led to the faddish boast of being "into fathering." What we were really into was our usual deep doo-doo, so the invention of parenting was a foregone conclusion.

Florence King can be reached at P.O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, VA 22404.

Alec Baldwin may think of himself as a flaming liberal, but in fact he is coming across as a reactionary father in a sea of progressive parents. The "family judge" involved in his divorce case was so alarmed by the way he raised his voice to his daughter that she temporarily barred all contact between him and the girl. Worse, unlike the boyish, delicately built Larry Birkhead who parented Anna Nicole Smith's baby, Baldwin, the five-o'clock-shadowed burly meat-eater, even *looks* like an angry white male.

This would take a whole lot of explaining, so he hopped aboard the Apology Century Unlimited and jawed at every stop about the importance of "parenting skills" and his need for "parenting counseling." He went on *The View* and explained parental displacement, i.e., how you can be cussing out your daughter when suddenly you realize that you're actually cussing out her mother. He seemed to be on every show, even if it was just his voiceover and film clips, listening to everybody else's fatherhood stories. The talk-show crowd discussed whether his career was "over," and what he would "do" now, as if we would momentarily see him stumbling out of town with all his worldly goods in a bandana on a stick.

That's when he inspired himself. "I have a dream," he announced, tremulously if unoriginally. Yes? "To go out this door today and do something else with my life." What? Give up acting, he told Dr. Phil, and devote himself to helping alienated divorcing parents who hate each other. He wants to be a parenting counselor!

Somewhere around the 857th repetition of the word *parent* I heard a familiar voice in my head yelling, "I'm your father!" That's how the good talking-to of old usually started, before it unraveled in all directions for want of parenting skills. To girls of my vintage and our mothers it was called "getting worked up," which was something only fathers did; they owned the idiom. Mothers got "upset," but only a father could get worked up. In the pre-parenting era, it was how somebody in fine fettle talked to somebody in dire straits.

If certain overly melodramatic words, antiquated phrases, and arcane conclusions and configurations invariably found their way into the mix it is because fathers of daughters simply can't *not* use them.

Orgy: any party

Good-for-nothing: any date

Snake in the Grass: any boy you've dated more than once

Dissipated Lecher: the 20-year-old steady boyfriend who was as unthreatening as Jimmy Lydon in the Henry Aldrich movies

The Middle of the Night: between midnight and 1 A.M.

The Crack of Dawn: between 2 and 3 A.M.

Stark Naked: a one-piece bathing suit, with an extra fold of material across the front, like a little curtain, that you pulled down to cover the crotch area

"Tell me the truth!"

"Nothing happened!"

"I'll kill him."

It ended the only way monologues can. He finally wound down, but not before he delivered his standard exit line: "I'm going to straighten you out!" Alec Baldwin said "I am going to straighten your a** out," which he should not have done, but otherwise it was close enough to make me smile and to make him sound like an honest-to-God father, and so I say two cheers for Alec Baldwin.

I also side with his brother, who made the crisp observation that the anagrammatic possibilities between "parent" and "paternity" are now held in contempt, and reminded the audience what had made Alec mad to begin with: The daughter was playing telephone tag, arranging to take calls and then wandering off when they were scheduled. "She has to learn to be punctual and to keep her word," he said.

Three cheers for the unequivocal Baldwin brother! **NR**

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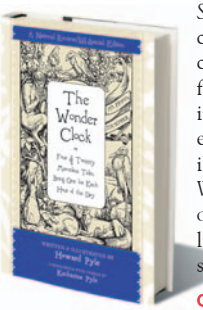

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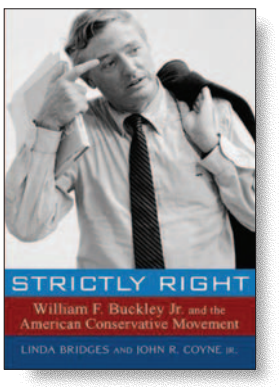
The Inside Story



Strictly Right: William F. Buckley Jr. and the American Conservative Movement, by Linda Bridges and John R. Coyne Jr. (Wiley, 358 pp., $27.95)

GEORGE H. NASH

In recent years books about *National Review* have become a cottage industry. In 2004 came William F. Buckley Jr.'s literary autobiography, *Miles Gone By*. In 2005, his sister Priscilla's *Living It Up at National Review*. In 2006, Jeffrey Hart's volume *The Making of the American Conservative Mind*. This wave is no effusion of nostalgia. *National Review* is now regarded as the most influential political magazine of the past half-century. And who knows its history better than those who made it?

In *Strictly Right* Linda Bridges and John R. Coyne Jr. have added a lively contribution to this genre. They are well placed and qualified for the task. Bridges has worked at *National Review* since college, and is now an editor-at-large. Coyne is a former associate editor, feature writer, and Washington correspondent for the magazine. Both are *National Review* insiders, with an insider's feel for the dynamics of the enterprise.

Strictly Right is partly an informal history of *National Review*, partly a biographical portrait of its founding editor, and partly a chronicle of modern American conservatism. But whereas Bill and Priscilla Buckley have written sparkling memoirs, and Jeffrey Hart a provocative intellectual history, Coyne and Bridges have successfully done something else. They have compiled, as it were, a behind-the-scenes family album, filled with glimpses of the NR family at work and play.

From its inception *National Review* has always had some of the earmarks of a family business. William F. Buckley Jr., the founder and editor, owned the entire voting stock. Early on he hired his sister Priscilla, an accomplished journalist, to provide ballast. Eventually she became managing editor, a post she held for more than a quarter of a century. Other Buckley siblings—notably Aloïse Buckley Heath—made their appearance in the magazine's pages. And Bill's race for the New York City mayoralty in 1965 paved the way for his campaign manager—his brother Jim—to enter politics himself and become in 1970 "the sainted junior senator from New York."

Successful families require hands-on fathers, and *National Review* in its youth was no exception. Not quite 30 years old when the magazine's first issue appeared, Bill Buckley seemed miscast for his role. The brash and dashing polemicist from Yale did not exactly resemble Robert Young in *Father Knows Best*. But precisely because he was younger than most of his colleagues (and controlled the voting stock), Buckley was able to keep NR's house from collapsing. As Bridges and Coyne explain, *National Review* had more than its share of contentious personalities: men like Frank Meyer, Willmoore Kendall, Brent Bozell, and William Schlamm, among others. Buckley the sharp-tongued debater discovered that he needed—and possessed—the "fatherly" diplomatic skills to keep his sometimes cantankerous colleagues from upending their common endeavor.

Successful families also need steadying rituals. Bridges and Coyne astutely describe the lubricating rituals and customs that made *National Review* function with increasing harmony: the fortnightly editorial conferences, the dinners at Paone's, the annual *Messiah* Party before Christmas, even the occasional practical jokes. Whether from instinct or from what Edmund Burke would have called the unbought grace of life, Buckley saw to it that working at *National Review* was never simply a job. He made it fun. For his devoted staff it became a way of life.

It was a way of life routinely leavened by laughter—another secret of familial survival. Be prepared to chuckle and guffaw when you read the book. *Strictly Right* abounds with examples of the humor that served as a bonding agent between the magazine's helmsman and his crew. Like the time someone asked Buckley why Sen. Robert Kennedy refused to appear on Buckley's television talk show, *Firing Line*. "Why," Buckley replied, "does the baloney reject the grinder?" Or the time Henry Gibson asked Buckley on *Laugh-In* why he was always seated when he appeared on television. Couldn't he think on his feet? Buckley retorted: "It's very hard to stand up carrying the weight of what I know."

Sometimes the magazine's playful insouciance led its editors to push the envelope, to the discomfiture of those who thought NR insufficiently serious for its own good. Bridges and Coyne recount how in 1971, after the leak of the top-secret Pentagon Papers to the *New York Times* during the Vietnam War, the senior editors of *National Review* prepared a sensational issue containing their own purported cache of leaked government documents. It was a hoax, skillfully concocted by the senior editors themselves. Buckley and his cohorts wanted to demonstrate that the liberal, antiwar media could be taken in by forged documents so long as their contents were "inherently plausible." The NR editors succeeded: The media, temporarily duped, were outraged by the prank.

But not just the media. NR's own publisher, who was not let in on the joke beforehand, was furious. This reviewer knows a conservative who spent hours studying NR's elaborate forgeries—only to learn that he had been wasting his time. I do not think

Mr. Nash is the author of *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (ISI).

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he ever read *National Review* again.

Such high-spiritedness undoubtedly buoyed the NR family in its formative years. But humor alone was not sufficient. Back in the 1950s it became fashionable to say that "the family that prays together, stays together." In a way, this was true of the folks at *National Review*. At no time, of course, did the magazine's editors promulgate a confessional statement or adhere to a single religious faith. Individuals of many religious traditions (and no tradition) contributed to its pages and still do. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy how many of *National Review*'s founding generation were either ardent Roman Catholics (like the Buckleys) or friendly fellow travelers of the Catholic Church. A remarkable number of the magazine's principal contributors—including Willmoore Kendall, Jeffrey Hart, Russell Kirk, Brent Bozell, and Frank Meyer—became Catholic converts. At least two others—Ernest van den Haag and James Burnham—were lapsed Catholics who returned to the fold shortly before their deaths.

Although NR was never, in any formal sense, a "Catholic magazine" (as left-wing critics sometimes alleged), Catholic Christianity shaped the worldview of many, maybe most, of its inner circle. A Christian sensibility formed the subtext—and context—for much of NR's brand of conservatism. It was another tie that bound the NR "tribe" together.

Strictly Right is not an exhaustive history of its subject. Organized as an episodic narrative, it largely eschews interpretation for a diet rich in anecdotes. But patterns, willy-nilly, emerge. Bridges and Coyne provide fresh insight, for example, into the enduring tug-of-war in the magazine between what Jeffrey Hart calls "prudential conservatism" (exemplified by James Burnham) and more aggressively ideological formulations (championed by Frank Meyer and William A. Rusher, among others).

The authors also bring into focus the magazine's own evolution. For the first ten years or so of its existence, *National Review* was more than an upstart journal of opinion; it could plausibly claim to be American conservatism's Central Command. It had the field of conservative advocacy journalism largely to itself, and its political allies were largely out of power. During this phase of the magazine's history, issues of doctrine and intellectual self-definition were at the apex of its agenda.

By 1980, *National Review*'s status had begun to change. Many of its early intellectual giants no longer wrote for its pages. Richard Weaver, Willmoore Kendall, and Frank Chodorov had died in the 1960s; Frank Meyer in 1972. In 1978 James Burnham suffered a debilitating stroke. In 1980 Russell Kirk ceased writing his regular column after 25 years of unflagging service.

Coincidentally, the advent of the Nixon administration—and, far more significantly, the Reagan administration—shifted the center of gravity in American conservatism decisively toward Washington, the world of politics and the think tanks—and away from the intelligentsia and its flagship journal.

Organized as an episodic narrative, the book largely eschews interpretation for a diet rich in anecdotes. But patterns, willy-nilly, emerge.

The magazine remained influential, of course—in some ways, even more so. Its editor-in-chief was increasingly honored as (in Hart's words) "the most influential journalist since Walter Lippmann." But 1980 undeniably marked a turning point. American conservatism—and *National Review* itself—had reached adulthood. The movement's Silver Age, the Age of Reagan, superseded the fabled Golden Age of NR's youth.

Bridges and Coyne's family album invites such ruminations. It also turns its strobe lights on relatively unfamiliar sides of Buckley's life, including his relationship with his talented son (and fellow author), Christopher, and with Bill's witty, Canadian-born wife, Pat (who passed away just a few weeks ago). Even close friends of Buckley will discover things about him that they did not know when they peruse this delectable book.

In Bridges and Coyne's affectionate portrait of their chief, two traits stand out. The first is how restless and adventurous he has been. Whether driving to work in Manhattan on a Honda motor scooter (as he did for several years), or sailing the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in little yachts, or driving down a winding mountain road in the Azores at 60 miles per hour, the founder of *National Review* has never been a stereotypical stodgy Tory.

The other trait that *Strictly Right* illuminates is Buckley's astonishing drive and productivity. In nearly 60 years (and counting) in the public eye, he has published 54 books, 400 articles and book reviews, and more than 4,000 newspaper columns. He has hosted one of the longest-running public-affairs shows in the history of television; delivered uncounted hundreds of public lectures; run for mayor of New York City; played a musical instrument at a near-professional level of competence; touched foot on all seven continents; and quite possibly written more letters than any other American who has ever lived.

All this raises an obvious question: How could one man accomplish so much and still find time to edit *National Review*? Was Buckley—as some have hinted—an absentee landlord?

Bridges and Coyne vigorously dispute this suggestion. They note that between 1955 and 1990 (when Buckley retired from the helm), he personally edited the editorial section of the magazine about three-quarters of the time, hired and dismissed columnists, commissioned articles, and "made the final decision" on virtually all signed contributions to his journal. Whether in the office or out of it, "his was the controlling intelligence."

But the authors acknowledge that it was a loyal team led by Priscilla that handled most of the daily editorial responsibilities. And therein lay the final key to the survival of the *National Review* family: Over time it became an extended family, an institution, a fortress against human foibles and mortality. But institutions, we know, are not impersonal beings. They are animated by the character of their founders. At the end of *Strictly Right* Bridges and Coyne perceptively remark that among Buckley's multifaceted achievements one more deserves recognition: He was a gifted "institution builder" who created a great journalistic enterprise and held it together.

Just so. No one else could have done it. At *National Review* it took a Bill Buckley to raise a family. **NR**

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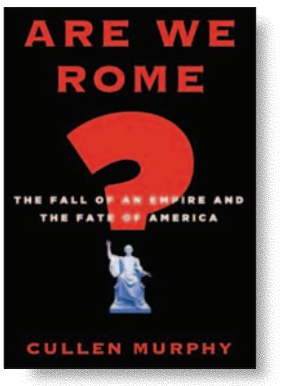
Pop Romanizing



Are We Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America, by Cullen Murphy (Houghton Mifflin, 272 pp., $24)

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

In the last decade, and especially after 9/11, it has become popular once again to compare the United States to ancient Rome. The pop analogies almost always appear in the pessimistic context of an American colossus betraying its origins and ideals—and, like Rome, facing the deserved end of its empire.

Those on the left warn about America's hard imperial hand on the "Other" abroad. Meanwhile, our contemporary conservative elder Catos lament the corruption of the old, small, agrarian republic into an empire. Both predict—almost gleefully, and sometimes in apocalyptic terms—American "exhaustion," "decline," or something similar to a Roman "fall."

Of course, there are a number of similarities between the two superpowers, ancient and modern. Both were practical, inclusive societies that rapidly incorporated foreigners. They alike unexpectedly achieved global stature and influence—at first through astounding feats of arms in filling the vacuum of eroding empires (the end of the Hellenistic East in the 2nd century B.C. was perhaps analogous to the postwar breakup of the British Empire).

Soon each upstart nation won further adherents by an insidiously efficient way of doing things, based on merit rather than mere class, that offered material prosperity to millions not to be found through local indigenous cultures. Likewise, brilliant Roman and American writers have left thoughtful observations about the ironies—and pathologies—of their seemingly unstoppable societies that changed the world abroad and, in the process, their once-traditional citizenry within.

But for any valid comparison, some basic ground rules of this old game of "America as Rome" are to be followed. First, keep in mind that the idea of a monolithic "Rome" is a sort of construct—reflecting 700 years of Italian republican government, followed by another half-millennium of imperial Mediterranean rule. What "Rome," then, do we of infant nations evoke? Is Rome to be the rather small, agrarian republic trying to stop Carthage in the first Punic war? Or Edward Gibbon's 2nd-century A.D. hundred years of bliss? Or the chaos of a perennially tottering empire yet another 200 years later?

Second, recognize that Roman literature, usually written by disaffected elites, is as consistently reactionary as it is moralistic in nature. Juvenal, Livy, Petronius, Sallust, the younger Seneca, Suetonius, and Tacitus, all knee-deep in the luxury of their times, all nevertheless deplored the supposed decadence of their respective eras. They can be fine witnesses to Roman decline and the corrosive effects of *luxus*, but their pessimistic—and often hypocritical—genre of "things going to hell in a hand basket" needs to be weighed carefully against concomitant evidence from mute numismatics, epigraphy, and archeology that reflect a booming culture often at odds with what the cynical said about it.

For the once-great families, it might have been a seminal moment to see respected Roman matrons increasingly covered with blood and dust in the first row of the amphitheater, oohing and aahing the abs of the gladiators. But most in North Africa or Eastern Europe—who with Romanization at last had clean water and *habeas corpus*—could not have cared less. Petronius (Nero's own *arbiter elegantiae*) saw the crass nouveau-riche upstarts as proof of imperial decadence. But some of the novelist's gauche characters, like the Jewish buffoon Trimalchio and the rag-collector Echion, are more likely welcome evidence that millions by the 1st century A.D. were succeeding in a global system increasingly based on merit, not class—anathema to Petronius's old Italian upper crust.

Third, there should be an up-front recognition that common Rome/America comparisons, from Oswald Spengler's to Pat Buchanan's, are rarely meant to be laudatory. Instead, they are admonitory in nature, warning that the "bread and circuses" of the United States, too, will—and should—soon end. Key is the superficiality that both Romans and Americans were somehow malevolent, forgetting that in comparison with the alternatives of the times, most of the "Other" voted with their feet to get within the imperial borders by any means at their disposal.

Cullen Murphy (editor at large at *Vanity Fair* and co-author of *Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage*) does not draw extensively from the evidence of the ancient world, other than selected quotes in translation from the usual grim Roman moralists. That paucity of ancient evidence is buttressed on the modern side by a plethora of references to contemporary culture. So evocation of everything from Abu Ghraib, the Green Zone, Halliburton (but of course), and Blackwater USA to Ahmed Chalabi, Ken Lay, and the Cheneys is used to hammer home the preordained point that our selfish right-wing elites have become like Suetonius's vulgar Julio-Claudians in devouring public resources, eroding our freedoms, and ruining our name and influence abroad. But even the non-classicist will finally bristle at such simplicity, replete as it is with references to the movies *Spartacus* and *Gladiator* and the video game *Rome: Total War*.

The predetermined conclusions govern the presentation of evidence. Murphy perhaps tips his hand at the very beginning by reminding us of a trip by George W. Bush to Europe to consult with allies. For Murphy, it was reminiscent of a Roman emperor on a visit to the northwest provinces—"a meeting, in other words, with the leaders of allied or subsidiary nations." Yes, Europeans may voice such

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unhappiness with their postwar subordinate roles. But the idea that they are clients like Caesar's conquered tribes doesn't work too well in the classical sense because the autonomous EU has a larger population and economy than the U.S., and often acts collectively to thwart American ambitions and visions.

Murphy selects several areas for comparison—the capitals, the legions, the fixers, the outsiders, and the borders—mines his ancient and modern popular cultural referents, and then offers the cookie-cutter results. That Murphy is witty, writes well, is well versed in irony, and understands the excesses of American popular culture still does not mean that his conclusions are not mostly as superficial as they are predictable: "Rome displayed the attribute of any great capital with more hubris than humility: the overweening self-regard, the presumption that it knew better than others, the surprising ignorance about foreign cultures, the languid arrogance, the competitive displays of wealth . . ."

In truth, Rome knew far more about foreign nations than any one of them did about Rome. There was simply nothing comparable in Numidia, Parthia, or Germany to the anthropology evident in Caesar's *Gallic War*, Sallust's *Jugurtha*, Pliny's *Natural History*, or the *Germania* and *Agricola* of Tacitus, which all reveal Rome's near-obsession with the political and natural history of its neighbors.

When we get to the American side of that equation we unfortunately reach the same reductionism: "Dick Cheney's travel requirements became public in 2006, revealing that when he entered a new hotel room he wanted all the television sets already turned on and tuned in to the ideologically congenial Fox News." But that tidbit about the cause and effect between insular news and blinkered politics has about as much relevance to the notion of America as Rome as the fact that media spinners like Chris Matthews, Bill Moyers, George Stephanopoulos, and Tim Russert all came to their glamorous media craft from prior partisan-political careers.

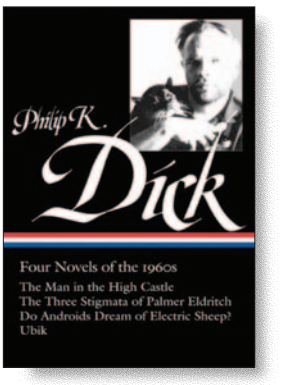
Murphy's military comparison should be more fertile, since—like Rome—we have an army that is relatively small, professional, and voluntary. Yet here too we get the same simplification—e.g., the observation that such nicknames of Roman legions as "Thunderbolt" (Legion XII *Fulminata*) conjure up our own "Iron Horse" (the 4th armored division), or the profound statement that "yesterday's Conan the barbarian is Conan the contractor."

About this last, it should be observed that *all* large militaries contract out services. The Ottoman fleet was run by renegade Italian admirals. The British 19th-century military ruled the world with a tiny force supplemented by indigenous hires. The French Foreign Legion is not much French. In fact, purely mass-conscription civic militaries—whether the Roman army that beat Hannibal or ours that defeated Hitler and Tojo—are rare in civilized history. More important, the current education level of the U.S. military now exceeds that of the general population. Its private contractors are subject to a level of official and media scrutiny unknown in Roman courts. The Pentagon operates under oversight unimaginable among Roman proconsuls.

For the similarities to Roman "fixers" we get most prominently Jack Abramoff and "the Republican contribution hierarchy"—again with not enough recognition that there is a tradition of criminal prosecution of such malefactors in the U.S. (of a kind unknown in Rome). Nor does Murphy stress enough that the contemporary problem of influence peddling inside the Beltway is bipartisan in nature—as we saw with the serial renting of the Lincoln Bedroom during the 1990s, the Department of Commerce–sponsored overseas junkets, or the pardoning of shady high rollers by the Clinton administration.

Oddly, in a far more introspective conclusion, Murphy settles down somewhat, and offers some thoughtful reasons we need not become an imperial Rome. Here, sounding more like a reverential Livy than a Petronius or Juvenal, he is absolutely right that the amazing American trait of self-reflection and criticism can correct the current malfeasance at home and lapses abroad in a way the imperial bureaucracy of Rome in its last centuries could not—if we remember how and why Americans are not, and should not be, Romans. **NR**

Canon Fodder



Four Novels of the 1960s,
by Philip K. Dick
(Library of America, 900 pp., $35)

KELLY JANE TORRANCE

In 1981, less than a year before his death, Philip K. Dick wrote that managing to publish only one of the many non-genre books he had written was the "long-term tragedy" of his creative life. The science-fiction writer published over 30 novels and more than three times as many short stories in his lifetime, but the mainstream success he craved always eluded him. Like many American originals, Dick was taken seriously by the French—some even suggested him as a Nobel Prize candidate—before his own countrymen understood his talent. Even after his death, his reputation didn't increase at the same rate as his name recognition: Hollywood turned Philip K. Dick into an identifiable brand, but one that was best known for providing a brainy basis for big-budget action flicks.

If only Dick, born in 1928, had lived to 78 instead of just 53. A quarter-century after his death, he is finally considered not just a serious American writer but one of the century's greatest. At least, that's one conclusion to be drawn from Dick's inclusion in the Library of America: the first science-fiction writer to be so canonized in

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what is the closest thing to secular sainthood in American letters. Best known for collecting the works of such titans as James and Faulkner, the Library of America presents "America's best and most significant writing in authoritative editions." And Dick has been included not for his realist books, which finally started appearing in print posthumously, but for some of his most outlandish sci-fi creations.

Some may complain that a genre writer has beaten Hemingway and Upton Sinclair into the Library of America. But these four novels—*The Man in the High Castle*, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and *Ubik*—are not simply outstanding examples of their form. With their haunting evocations of alienation, thoughtful meditations on reality and religion, and vivid prose style, they are among the best American novels written in the last century.

The sci-fi genre, in fact, was just a colorful trapping Dick used to frame his tales of ordinary people caught up in situations they can barely understand, let alone control. As one character in *The Man in the High Castle* says of that book's novel within a novel, "He told us about our world. . . . He wants us to see it for what it is."

High Castle is barely even science fiction. It's alternate history, an imagining of what the world would have been like if the Axis had won World War II. Japan has control of the West Coast of the U.S. and Germany has control of the East Coast, while the Rocky Mountain States serve as a semi-autonomous buffer between the two. The novel follows a loosely connected cast of characters from all three regions. Robert Childan is the owner of American Artistic Handcrafts, a San Francisco store selling artifacts of American history—Civil War arms, Mickey Mouse watches—to Japanese clients who worship the remnants of the culture they've destroyed. Among them is Nobusuke Tagomi, a high-ranking bureaucrat who undergoes an acute mental crisis on being faced with the deeds of his German colleagues—they've emptied Africa of the Africans and New York of the Jews. Frank Frink, meanwhile, is a jewelry designer trying to sell his wares to Childan, who has no interest in anything involving *current* America. Frink is a Jew who's changed his name—the Japanese may themselves not kill the Jews, but they sometimes send them back to the Germans.

High Castle has some of Dick's most sharply drawn characters. Like most genre novels, his are usually strongest on plot. But in *High Castle*, it is the journey and not the destination that matters. Each character grapples with the difficulty of living in a world of evil—an Axis-ruled America being just an extreme version of our own flawed world.

This world, some characters realize, doesn't have to be so wicked. A banned book making the surreptitious rounds is an alternate history imagining a world in which the Allies won World War II. (Dick could be as meta as the most literary of experimental novelists.) This novel, *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, doesn't exactly mirror the real world—after winning the war, America also solved its race problem. But in showing a world in which Americans didn't adopt Nazi anti-Semitism, *Grasshopper* suggests to the despondent that it might still be possible for men to do good.

Dick's books are known for their dystopias. His futures are filled with technological innovations that have alienated the human beings who created them. But what many commentators miss is the sense of hope that, without fail, shines through.

Nowhere is hope more needed than in the outrageously imagined world of *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. Global warming has made Earth almost unlivable; there still exist bores who accost you on the subway with, "It's going to be another hot one." The United Nations drafts unlucky citizens to colonize nearby planets, where conditions are even worse: Facing such barren landscapes, the colonists don't even want to leave their hovels, and keep from killing themselves by taking a hallucinogen that simulates the Earth world they know and love. But when industrialist Palmer Eldritch comes back from the outer reaches of the solar system with a competing drug, this tender equilibrium is disrupted. The new product's slogan is: "God promises eternal life. We can deliver it." But that eternal life—or the hallucination of it—comes with a price: the manifestation of the godlike Eldritch in everybody who takes it.

Palmer Eldritch tackles what it means to be human: Colonists seem happy enough to give up their humanity if it means an escape from a world too cruel to bear. Again Dick explores good and evil in a desolate world, finding, as in *High Castle*, that man can counter original sin and reach the divine that's in all of us through empathy, "grasping another, [but] not from outside."

Empathy plays a crucial role in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, the book that inspired the film *Blade Runner*. The marital spat that begins the novel might find a place in any realist novel, except for the fact that the couple is arguing about the use of a "mood organ" that programs feelings in its users. "I can't stand TV before breakfast," Iran says. "Dial 888," Rick tells her: "the desire to watch TV, no matter what's on it." "I don't feel like dialing anything at all now," she responds. "Then dial 3," he says.

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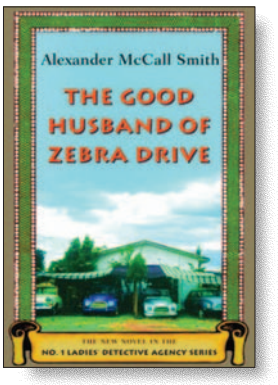
But Rick cannot: He's a bounty hunter whose job is to round up the androids who have killed their masters and made their way to Earth and freedom. He tells the difference between android and human through an empathy test, which androids fail. Over the course of a single day, Rick begins to question his choice of profession. He watches an immensely talented opera singer, who brought the world much joy, killed, while another android gives herself away by repeatedly referring to an owl as "it." (Most of our own population would fail such a test.)

In *Ubik*, the question isn't who's android and who's human, it's who's alive, who's dead, and who's in between. In the future world of *Ubik*, the dead are quickly put on ice to live out their "halflives," in which the mind keeps going for a while. The book's characters wonder whether they're fully alive or just half alive. It's an exhausting world, but Dick has the same lesson here as in the other novels: No matter what God or demons play with us, we still have the ability—and, more important, the responsibility—to make choices.

One of the characters likes to say, "So it goes"—which is also a repeated line in another book published in 1969, the late Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Like Dick, Vonnegut used the conventions of genre to focus his readers' attention on ideas crucial to our understanding of what it is to be human. Unlike Dick, Vonnegut never had to fight for literary respectability. Yet Dick is just as funny as Vonnegut and as gifted a prose stylist as any. Even if he had never delved into mankind's search for meaning in an increasingly alienating world, he would still belong in the Library of America for creating striking, unexpected metaphors and beautiful sentences about the human heart. His books are filled with learning; this college dropout effortlessly references Shakespeare, the Bible, and the *I Ching*. (Novelist Jonathan Lethem has written endnotes that could have been a bit more extensive.)

Fortunately, Dick used his gifts to speak eloquently about the dominant themes of the 20th century. His books offer hope, reminding us that, mistake-prone though we are, free will means we have at least the means of making the right decisions. As a character in *Palmer Eldritch* asks, "Isn't a miserable reality better than the most interesting illusion?" NR

Liberalism's Little Women



The Good Husband of Zebra Drive, by Alexander McCall Smith (Pantheon, 213 pp., $21.95)

ELIZABETH POWERS

THE novels of my childhood were rich in life lessons. In Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, for example, adults and kids alike knew their duty, did the right thing, and were grateful for the blessings they enjoyed. Today's popular "No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" series—of which *The Good Husband of Zebra Drive* is the eighth installment—reflects, in a distinctly modern manner, the same ethos.

Despite the series title, novelist Alexander McCall Smith is not quite writing detective novels, though it is true that the No. 1 Lady, Mma Precious Ramotswe, a large ("traditionally built") lady, is "the doyenne of the profession of private-enquiry agent" in Botswana. ("Mma," incidentally, is the equivalent of "Mother" or "Mrs." in Botswana's Setswana language.) Ramotswe's career began when she was 34, after the death of her father. From the sale of the fine herd of cattle he bequeathed her, she bought a house on Zebra Drive in Gaborone and, armed only with her good sense and a copy of Clovis Andersen's *Principles of Private Detection*, opened her practice. It has the usual assets of literary gumshoes: "a tiny white van, two desks, two chairs, a telephone, and an old typewriter." She also keeps a teapot for brewing the redbush tea with which she sets clients at ease when they present themselves at the premises the agency shares with Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors.

Though her "cases" tend to involve the bread and butter of the profession—e.g., background checks and surveillance—the novels are not whodunits, because there is usually little doubt or suspense, and actual crimes are rare. She has no territorial squabbles with police, with whom she never interacts. Her realm is what she calls "private troubles": The first of the three inquiries in *The Good Husband of Zebra Drive* concerns a not-so-good husband suspected of adultery. As a would-be competitor complains (in *The Kalahari Typing School for Men*): "People in this place lead very boring lives. They have no problems to sort out . . . not like Johannesburg."

This assertion is ironic, for, while Mma Ramotswe's cases are minor in a criminal sense, the novels have as their subject the

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deep and engaging subject of morality, specifically the everyday variety by which people lead good lives. This is evident even in the fanciful chapter titles ("A Very Rude Person," in *The Good Husband*) and in the titles of some of the novels (*Morality for Beautiful Girls*).

Mma Ramotswe is "a great lady for thinking," says Mma Potokwane, matron of the orphan farm (Dickensian echoes abound throughout the series): "It does not matter to you if there is nobody around, you can just think." The things she thinks about, while driving in her white van or drinking a cup of bush tea with her secretary-cum-assistant Grace Makutsi, include a host of issues that would keep a graduate seminar in philosophy occupied for a semester. A frequent subject is "means and ends": Can one lie or use other dishonest methods to achieve a good outcome or entrap a bad person? In not a few cases the result of her inquiries is what Mma Ramotswe refers to as a restoration of "the moral balance": In one case she helps a now-rich man locate people he harmed in his youth so that he can make restitution.

In every novel, Mma Ramotswe reflects on the difference between "the old Botswana morality" and the modern world of children who do not respect their elders or of selfish people who think only of themselves. Such people simply lack an essential "imaginative part": "A whole generation, not only in Africa, but everywhere else, had not been taught to feel for others because the parents simply had not bothered to teach them this." The place where the old Botswana morality was transmitted was the village. From *The Full Cupboard of Life*: "Everybody in a village had a role to play in bringing up a child—and cherishing it—and in return that child would in due course feel responsible for everybody in that village. That is what makes life in society possible. We must love one another and help one another in our daily lives. That was the traditional African way and there was no substitute for it. None."

This is the most direct reference to Hillary Clinton's ideas as a source of inspiration for the "No. 1 First Ladies" series. But what becomes clear throughout these novels is that the decline of "the old Botswana morality," of the conservative certainties that once governed people's lives and the upbringing of the village's children, has left an opening shaped quite precisely for the entry of Hillary-style liberal do-goodism. Mma Ramotswe, though no Mrs. Jellyby, has a sense of responsibility toward others that is very capacious indeed. Since Botswana, despite its prosperity, suffers like the rest of Africa from enormous problems, especially AIDS ("this disease which was stalking through Africa"), her guide might be called the duty of moral proximity. The following is from *Morality for Beautiful Girls*: "She had often been out of pocket on a case, simply because she could not refuse to help a person in need. This is what I am called to do, she said to herself. I must help whomsoever asks for my help. That is my duty: to help other people with the problems in their lives. . . . You simply could not help everybody, but you could at least help those who came into your life. That principle allowed you to deal with the suffering you saw. That was your suffering."

The loss of the old morality also coincides with the decline of the role of men. The presiding presence behind this delicate fictional world, the incarnation of morality, is a patriarch: Mma Ramotswe's father, who, God-like, watched over her and "gave a texture and continuity to her life":

> Not a day went by, not one, that she did not think of him. . . . Each memory was a precious treasure to her, fondly dwelt upon, sacramental in its significance. Obed Ramotswe, who had loved his daughter, and who had saved every rand, every cent, that he made in those cruel mines, and had built up that fine herd of cattle for her sake, had asked nothing for himself. He did not drink, he did not smoke; he thought only of her and of what would happen to her.

Mr. J. L. B. Matekoni, the good husband of the present title, might seem to incarnate the old Botswana morality. As proprietor of Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors, he repudiates every cliché of car mechanics: To him, good workmanship is a "question of morality," and he "burns with indignation" to see an engine mistreated. A stock theme of the series is his attempt to do more than show his apprentices how to change an oil filter or repair brakes: "He should show them, preferably by example, how to behave as honourable mechanics. . . . That was something which had to be passed on from generation to generation of mechanics, and it was not always easy to do that."

As portrayed in these novels, however, the position of men, particularly their role in passing on traditional knowledge and customs, is one of irrelevance. The apprentices remain stubbornly empty-headed, and though Mr. Matekoni is himself a good man, he is also depressive and passive and absolutely powerless when it comes to the demands of women ("these women were always pushing him into things against his will"). More numerous are truly bad men (wife-beating, according to these novels, is a plague in Africa) or simply feckless or ineffectual men who have abdicated their responsibilities toward women.

As portrayed by Smith, something like the values of the U.N. have rushed in to fill the moral vacuum. Here is Mma Ramotswe, after the bossy Mma Makutsi and the apprentice Charlie settle their differences: "Great feuds often need very few words to resolve them. Disputes, even between nations, between peoples, can be set to rest with simple acts of contrition and corresponding forgiveness, can so often be shown to be based on nothing much other than pride and misunderstanding, and the forgetting of the humanity of the other." Could Hillary—or, for that matter, Louisa May Alcott—have said it any better? **NR**

ONE OF THOSE MOMENTS

Near sundown, on a day in early spring,
A sudden radiance in a shadowed street.
Soft, breathing trees—the airy spheres of foliage
Take on a tender valedictory light.
I look a long time as the dark comes on—
One of those moments when life seems complete.
Even in the dusk I feel the afterglow.
A single bird, a mockingbird, takes flight.

—ROBERT MEZEY

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■ FILM ■

Slingin' It

ROSS DOUTHAT

How do you kill off Spider-Man? I've puzzled over that question through all three installments of Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* saga, and the answer still eludes me. The spider-bite that transformed Peter Parker, *über*-nerd, into a wall-crawling, webslinging superfreak obviously augmented his strength to near-Superman proportions, enabling him to lift buildings off his lady love and yank speeding trains to a screeching halt. But more impressive than his strength is his physical resilience: He survives plunges from heights that would kill a lesser superhero, gets sideswiped by speeding trains without skipping a beat, and lasts a lot longer than you or I would while getting smashed, repeatedly, by the fist of a seven-story-tall sand monster.

This last sequence takes place near the end of *Spider-Man 3*, and it isn't a good sign for the franchise that I was more invested in figuring out what it takes to kill off Spidey—four punches from the Sandman's elephant-sized fists? five? six?—than in anything else that had happened on screen in the previous two hours. There are rumors that this was the most expensive movie ever made, eclipsing even the inflation-adjusted price of the Taylor-Burton *Cleopatra*, and the money wasn't exactly spent in vain: *Spider-Man 3* is stuffed like a Thanksgiving turkey, with more villains, more love interests, more special effects, and (alas) more dance numbers than the previous two movies put together. Indeed, given the price tag, I suppose it's almost understandable that a Sony Pictures accountant looked hard at the balance sheet and decided that if they were going to finance all that CGI, they couldn't afford to shell out for a screenplay too.

Or maybe they splurged on four screenplays and then hired a team of baboons to run them all together. That's a more likely explanation for why Tobey Maguire's Peter Parker ends up battling not only Thomas Haden Church's Sandman, a convict-turned-shape-shifter, but Venom (Topher Grace) and the New Goblin (James Franco, donning Willem Dafoe's Goblin gear from the first movie) as well, while contending with a collapsing romance and a black-goo symbiote from outer space that "amplifies characteristics of its host"—which in Peter's case, to judge from the bangs-over-the-eyes haircut he sports after bonding with the goo, means getting in touch with his inner indie rocker.

That this transformation is supposed to be sinister rather than hilarious is just one of the many problems with *Spider-Man 3*. Or at least sometimes it's supposed to be sinister, injecting a note of Batman-style inner turmoil into Spidey's candy-colored world; the next moment, though, Raimi is playing the symbiote-infected Peter for laughs, sending him swaggering down the street in a Eurotrash suit, practicing his dance moves and winking at horrified

women. I laughed, all right, but then again I also laughed at the *Sturm und Drang* that followed, with Tobey Maguire bare-chested in a church belfry, tearing the symbiote off himself and howling, to a swelling score, with all the pathos of a bad King Lear impression.

Worse than the tonal problems, though, are the endless *ex machina* moments, where the movie seems to be deliberately insulting the audience's intelligence. Every comic-book film climbs Mount Improbable, and no summer-movie aficionado would bat an eye at the possibility of a black goo from outer space, or a particle-physics experiment that turns a mournful escaped convict into a shifting, eddying sand creature, or a supersoldier serum and a flying skateboard that enable a tycoon's son to match Spider-Man blow for blow. But when the meteor carrying the black goo *happens* to land ten feet from the web where Peter and Kirsten Dunst's Mary Jane are making out, with no explanation save coincidence, the audience grows restless; when the Sandman *happens* to be the real killer of Peter's uncle, thus undercutting a major plot point from the first movie and suggesting a certain stakes-raising desperation in the filmmakers, the grumbling grows louder; and when the tycoon's son turns out to have a butler, heretofore unglimpsed, who *happens* to offer a crucial revelation at a crucial moment without explaining why he never mentioned it before, the only appropriate response is heckling, or maybe giggles.

There are bright spots: Haden Church's metamorphosis into the Sandman is a small masterpiece of digital effects, and a tear-drenched movie's only moving moment; Franco, who moped his way through the previous film, gets to have a little fun with his part this time around; and the early scenes where Peter basks in Spider-Man's city-wide celebrity have a little of the infectious "What if *you* were a superhero?" charm of the first two movies. But for the most part, Raimi wastes his resources: Haden Church gets half the screen time he deserves and Grace has about a quarter; a radiant Bryce Dallas Howard, as Mary Jane's rival Gwen Stacy, is hustled into the storyline and just as quickly hustled out; and fine character actors like James Cromwell and Theresa Russell are squandered in blink-and-you-miss-them cameos. Meanwhile, the holdovers from the earlier films aren't aging well: Peter's Aunt May (Rosemary Harris) bustles around, preachy as ever and increasingly unbearable, and Dunst herself, wan and haggard-looking, seems to have lost interest in these films, or maybe life itself.

The only good news for moviegoers is that *Spider-Man 3*'s longueurs and laziness suggest that its director may finally be tiring of the project. For Raimi, the superhero movie has been a kind of cinematic symbiote, amplifying his moneymaking but sapping his artistic promise. Before taking up with Spidey, he made the modest, harrowing Great Plains noir *A Simple Plan*, which didn't earn the bazillion dollars that *Spider-Man 3* will doubtless gross, but did hint at grown-up talents that have since lain fallow. I like to think that Raimi was watching that movie in his trailer while this one spiraled into folly, and that the inevitable *Spider-Man 4* will have someone else's name on it, while he moves on to smaller, better things. **NR**

SONY PICTURES

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■ CITY DESK ■

Grandest of Them All

RICHARD BROOKHISER

THE first quality of the *grande dame* is that she be grand herself—personally, physically. If she were a statue, she would have to be the one the Metropolitan Museum puts on a plinth in the center of a gallery, not folded into some recess along the wall. Beauty and ugliness are equally irrelevant to her presentation; whichever she is, the *grande dame* must be striking. Today she runs to thinness, as in the pages of Tom Wolfe. But Mrs. Manson Mingott, Edith Wharton's friend, was strikingly fat. "The immense accretion of flesh which had descended on her in middle life like a flood of lava on a doomed city had changed her from a plump, active little woman with a neatly-turned foot and ankle into something as vast and august as a natural phenomenon." Her flesh helped make her the "high and mighty old lady" that Newland Archer knew her to be. Jewelry can put the copestone on a wall that is otherwise lacking; Mrs. Astor always wore her jewels, wherever she appeared, because she knew, as she herself put it, that people expected to see "Mrs. Astor's jewels." Arthur Miller hectored us, "Attention must be paid!" The *grande dame* knows attention will be paid.

She must play on a grand stage. Wealth is necessary for outfitting her performance space, but so is taste. Not the taste that makes an apartment cozy, or inviting. Presumably *grandes dames* raid the fridge, curl up with catalogues, and watch television, like the rest of us, but we don't venture where they do it. What they have themselves, or command in others, is theatricality, the taste of set designers, window dressers, and the best rug merchants in the souk. The colors of their foyers and libraries, whether rich or bright, are bold and extreme. Black and white, in checkerboards or zebra stripes, can add an extra note, shrill but stirring, like the piccolo solo in "The Stars and Stripes Forever." Chairs must be ornamental, not easy—stubby legs? fine; a hard, straight back? no problem—for the point is not to relax. You can do that with a Bud at home. The public rooms of the *grande dame* are a luxury lounge in the hub airport of society. You pause there, en route, to enjoy yourself, and to be enjoyed by your hostess. The visual and tactile over-stimulation puts you on your mettle.

The social functions of the *grande dame* are encounters, which it is the privilege and responsibility of her sex to arrange. Encounters are beyond the power of most men, who are loners or pack animals: A man stays up until four in the morning, eating cold pizza slices and writing code, or downloading pornography; or he roams with other men to talk, drink, fight, hunt, make money, or play games. Left to their own devices, men in society would meet only endless replicas of themselves. Women, already bound to one set of aliens, their mates, arrange for other men, from different walks of life, and their attendant women, to meet. At the *grande dame*'s they must listen to (my God!) new things. The pianist will hear about the bull market, governors of square states will learn of the new room at the museum. No one can just unwind with friends because they aren't all friends. They must acknowledge the trays of appetizers, accept or decline second helpings, use and park the finger bowls, and share what they have to say. The rules of interaction will be better managed in Heaven, but the principle will be similar.

In these roomsful of talk the *grande dame* must be able to more than hold her own. Anyone might come—Henry Clay, Lord Copper, Herman Mankiewicz vomiting drunkenly onto his plate and telling his hostess, "Don't worry, the white wine came up with the fish." Famous monsters; but daily life is full of their equivalents. A complacent artist corrects your pronunciation; a young woman decides to sing a song about her skin, accompanying herself with gently struck brandy snifters; an old habitué, taking sudden offense, walks out. The *grande dame* must be able to defuse the conversational grenade that lands, pin pulled, on the table top, or throw one of her own. Bad jokes have to be laughed off; bad tempers have to be deflected; if someone pushes, she has to push back, hard. The reactionary philosopher Joseph de Maistre thought that society depended on its executioners; in the society of *grandes dames*, they themselves must sometimes play that role.

We value them for their independence of mind. Their fortunes may be entangled in inheritance and matrimony; they take on a thousand obligations, charitable, artistic, or political, as well as social; expectation watches every step, from the cut of their coats, to the cut of their remarks (if you are known as a good shot, then, like Wild Bill Hickok, you have to kill on every draw). They have, as recompense, the freedom to say anything, which they often do. They break windows, they sweep the cards to the floor. If they punch below their weight, we feel shocked and chilled, in the presence of power misused, but *dames* at their grandest know that behaving so is not an extension of themselves, but a lessening.

Snots write them off until the time comes when they would like an invitation. Others may fear or envy them. Everyone else does them honor. Page Six keeps a respectful distance; when they ask for money, wallets fly open; when they pass, it is a city-state occasion. Their second most loyal followers are their honor guards of gay men, drawn to personality and artifice; queens do not serve princesses in Debrett's, but that is the way it works in society. Their most loyal followers are those who are lucky enough to have known them when the materials of grandeur were still fresh from the workshop, a bit soft, not yet available to all.

1926–2007. R.I.P. **NR**

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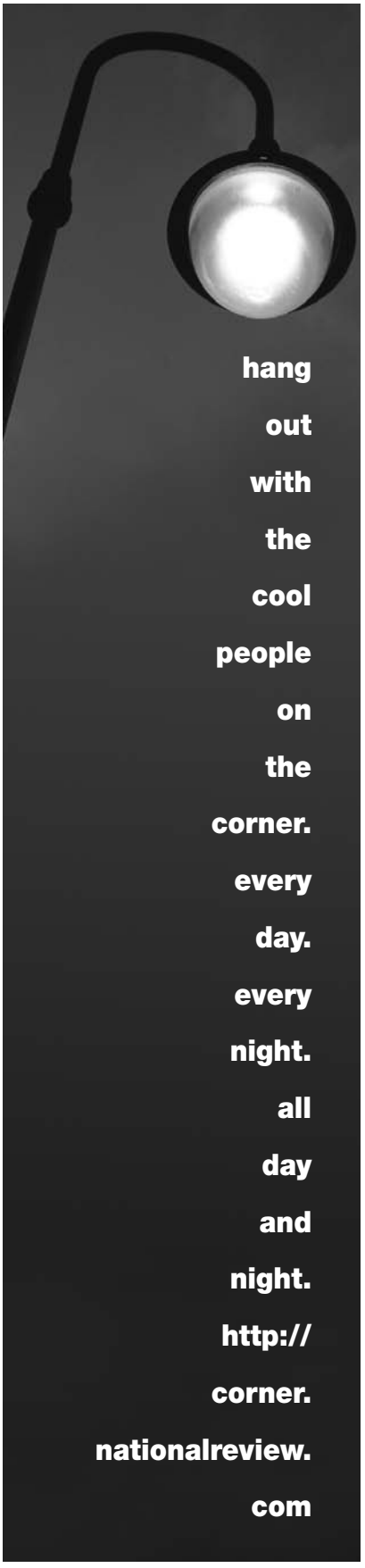

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Superstitions of Democracy

NEW YORK, APRIL 24

THE rapture in 1960 over the independence of Nigeria seems incredible, and was always that, but three words—anti-colonialism, independence, and democracy—were all that was thought to be needed to justify the jubilation. Nigeria had thrust away its colonial ties and would lead the way to the democratization of Africa. The optimism was bolstered by Nigeria's oil wealth, its robust size (twice California's), and its vigorous population (140 million). The reign of Nnamdi Azikiwe lasted until 1966, but since then there have been military despots until the elections of last week, which promise only continuing chaos.

The disasters in Africa have fed on the hobgoblins of the 20th century, which were that colonialism was inherently oppressive and that democracy was the key to progress and to national and indeed spiritual redemption. An aspect of this terrible superstition is that governments tend to be judged on democratic paradigms.

In last week's elections, Nigerian officials gave themselves credit for their handling of the polling places. But their satisfaction was sharply contrasted to the views of international observers—for instance, former secretary of state Madeleine Albright, who said, "In a number of places and in a number of ways, the election process failed the Nigerian people."

Still we confront, year after year, decade after decade, the surrealistic proposition that progress is measured by the extent of democratic practices. In a brilliant dispatch from Kano, a formerly prosperous city in the north of Nigeria, Lydia Polgreen of the *New York Times* gave us the true measure of the problem.

Nigeria is the second-wealthiest country in Africa and exports two million barrels of oil per day, but the money disappears into the hands of politicians and random profiteers. Observers calculate that, since independence, $380 billion has been wasted or plundered. The straits of the country are best recorded by describing daily life.

"In Kano's Government Residential Area, where the wealthy live," Ms. Polgreen writes, "each household is its own power and water company. Plastic water tanks on spidery legs tower over the tiled roofs, each fed by an electric pump sucking water from a private well. The electric company provides light just a few hours a day, so the air is thick with the belching diesel smoke of a thousand generators."

The reporter cites specific cases. "Idriss Abdoulaye sells water from a pushcart for 20 naira a jerry can, about 15 cents, to people like himself, too poor to have wells. He makes about $2 a day, and cannot afford to send his sons to school."

Consider the enterprise of Saidu Dattijo Adhama. He was in the textile business, and in days gone by he produced 3,000 garments a day. "Six years ago he was forced to shut down because paying for private generator power to run his knitters and spinners and pump water for his bleaching and dyeing machines left him unable to compete with cheap imports flooding the country in the wake of trade liberalization. 'The reason I went out of business is simple,' he said. 'It is the Nigerian factor. No light. No water. No reliable suppliers. How can I compete with someone in China who opens the tap and sees water? Who taps a switch and sees light?'"

The indispensable requirement for progress is the same in Nigeria as everywhere else in the world. One needs order. China, as the Nigerian textile manufacturer points out, supplies that. After order has been established, one needs liberty, to galvanize individual resources.

What will not do anything to restore life for the semi-dead in Nigeria is cant on the subject of democracy. Do they need a strongman? Manifestly, they do. Forget the superstitions of democracy.

The Waning of The GOP

NEW YORK, APRIL 27

THE political problem of the Bush administration is grave, possibly beyond the point of rescue. The opinion polls are savagely decisive on the Iraq question. About 60 percent of Americans wish the war ended—wish at least a timetable for orderly withdrawal. What is going on in Congress is in the nature of accompaniment. The vote in Congress is simply another salient in the war against war in Iraq. Republican forces, with a couple of exceptions, held fast against the Democrats' attempt to force Bush out of Iraq even if it required fiddling with the Constitution. President Bush will of course veto the bill, but its impact is critically important in the consolidation of public opinion. It can now accurately be said that the legislature, which writes the people's laws, opposes the war.

Meanwhile, George Tenet, former head of the CIA, has just published a book which seems to demonstrate that there was one part ignorance, one part bullheadedness, in the high-level discussions before war became policy. Mr. Tenet at least appears to demonstrate that there was nothing in the nature of a genuine debate on the question. What he succeeded in doing was aborting a speech by Vice President Cheney which alleged a Saddam/al-Qaeda relationship which had not in fact been established.

It isn't that Tenet now doubts the lethality of the terrorists. What he disputed was an organizational connection which argued for war against Iraq as if Iraq were a vassal state of al-Qaeda. A measure of Tenet's respect for the reach and malevolence of the enemy is his statement that he is puzzled that al-Qaeda has not, since 2001, sent out "suicide bombers to cause chaos in a half dozen American shopping malls on any given day."

But beyond affirming executive supremacy in matters of war, what is George Bush going to do? It is simply untrue that we are making decisive progress in Iraq. The indicators rise and fall from day to day, week to week,

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month to month. In South Vietnam there was an organized enemy. There is clearly organization in the strikes by the terrorists against our forces and against the civil government in Iraq, but whereas in Vietnam we had Hanoi as the operative headquarters of the enemy, we have no equivalent of that in Iraq, and that is a matter of paralyzing importance.

When the Romans were challenged by Christianity, Rome fell. The generation of Christians moved by their faith overwhelmed the regimented reserves of the Roman state. It was four years ago that Mr. Cheney first observed that there was a real fear that each fallen terrorist leads to the materialization of another terrorist. What can a "surge," of the kind we are now relying upon, do to cope with endemic disease?

General Petraeus is a wonderfully commanding figure. But if the enemy is in the nature of a disease, he cannot win against it. Students of politics ask then the derivative question: How can the Republican party, headed by a president determined on a war he can't see an end to, attract the support of a majority of the voters? General Petraeus, in his Pentagon briefing on April 26, reported persuasively that there has been progress, but cautioned, "I want to be very clear that there is vastly more work to be done across the board and in many areas, and again I note that we are really just getting started with the new effort."

The general makes it a point to steer away from the political implications of the struggle, but this cannot be done in the wider arena. There are grounds for wondering whether the Republican party will survive this dilemma.

Torture on *60 Minutes*

NEW YORK, MAY 1

THERE is no reason why George Tenet shouldn't promote his book, *At the Center of the Storm*. And every reason why those who have now heard him in action should wonder: How did such a man, so vain, so emotional, so unreasoning, become head of CIA?

Scott Pelley of CBS did fine work in attempting to explore Tenet's theses, but found himself at the outset of the interview dealing with a melodramatist, unsuited for the role of historian. Self-pity ruled: "People don't understand us, you know," Tenet started in. "They think we're a bunch of faceless bureaucrats with no feelings, no families, no sense of what it's like to be passionate about running these bastards down." If all that Tenet was saying was that a lot of people who do tedious work are underappreciated, he is right. There is a role for passion, clearly, when hunting down people who want to explode bombs in New York. But a key to success in clandestine operations is sobriety. A friend analogized the point for me years ago: "A surgeon doesn't look down on the ruptured appendix and say, 'I'll get you, you son of a bitch.'"

What *60 Minutes* wanted to know, was: What happened that led to so much misinformation in 2003?

Begin with the president's State of the Union address, in which he spoke of uranium being purchased in Niger to facilitate nuclear operations in Iraq.

In fact, it wasn't so.

Pelley: "The CIA had knocked down that uranium claim months before. The agency even demanded it be taken out of two previous presidential speeches. How did it get through the third time?"

Tenet: "I didn't read the speech. I was involved in a bunch of other things. . . . [I] handed it to my executive assistant. I said, 'You guys go review this and come back to me if I need to do anything.'"

Well, his guys either didn't review it, or did but didn't think the boss needed to be told for gawd's sake to do something about the president preparing, in a State of the Union address, to tell a story the CIA had already shown to be untrue.

Tenet said he had made a mistake. Pelley didn't ask him what measures he took to instruct or remove his executive assistant.

On to "slam dunk." The basketball metaphor, used by Tenet in talking with the president, has been taken as meaning that he thought the WMD offered a clear justification for going to war.

Pelley: "What did you mean by 'slam dunk'?"

Tenet: "I guess I meant that we could do better. I mean, you know, so . . ."

Pelley: "Do better?"

Tenet: "We can put a better case together for a public case. That's what I meant. That's what this was about."

Tenet managed to explain nothing.

Pelley wanted to explore the question, When the CIA thought it had hard information, how did it get such information?

Pelley: "Suspects were questioned under new, so-called 'enhanced interrogation techniques' said to include sleep deprivation, extreme cold, and 'water boarding' . . . . "

Tenet: "We don't torture people. Let me say that again to you, we don't torture people. Okay?"

Pelley: "Come on, George. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed?"

Tenet: "We don't torture people."

Pelley: "Water boarding?"

Tenet: "We do not—I don't talk about—techniques."

Tenet wanted to introduce another perspective. "I want you to listen to me. So the context is it's post 9/11. I've got reports of nuclear weapons in New York City apartment buildings that are going to be blown up, planes that are going to fly into airports all over again. I'm struggling to find out where the next disaster is going to occur. . . . I know that this program has saved lives. I know we've disrupted plots."

Pelley: "What you're essentially saying is some people need to be tortured."

Three times Tenet repeats that the CIA does not engage in torture, and three times Pelley presses the question. "You call it in the book, 'enhanced interrogation techniques.'"

Tenet: "Well, that's what we call it."

Pelley: "I mean, that's a euphemism."

Tenet: "I'm not having a semantic debate with you."

The testimony reveals the CIA run by a man who cannot think straight, advising the national security adviser, who went on to make false allegations, and the vice president, who made more false allegations, and the president, who took ill-considered actions.

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"Now what do we do?—I didn't know they could outsource panhandling."

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Prosecuting Conrad

In his 2000 presidential campaign, Alan Keyes was often asked a question about tax rates. He liked to respond by saying the rate was unimportant and then, as jaws hit the floor, expand the thought with some variant of the following: "If the tax rate is 20 percent, what proportion of your income does the government control?"

And whoever asked the question would respond: "20 percent."

"No," Keyes would reply. "The government controls 100 percent of your income. Because you have to justify the part you keep."

Very true. And, as you'll know if you've ever attracted the attentions of the government, that's not as easy as it sounds. There's no correct answer to the question: "How much tax do I owe?" Go to ten different accountants and they'll come up with ten different numbers.

I've thought about the Keyes proposition often during the last couple of months. I've been in Chicago attending the trial by Patrick Fitzgerald of my once and (I hope) future boss Conrad Black. Until late 2003, Conrad ran some of the best (and most reliably conservative) publications in the world and provided a platform in Britain, Canada, and elsewhere for Theodore Dalrymple, David Frum, Paul Johnson, and other voices well-known to National Review readers. But he's now in a federal courthouse attempting, in Keyes's formulation, to justify to the government the part he kept—the money and other benefits he earned from Hollinger International in the years before his removal as chairman.

Aside from my colleague John O'Sullivan's preview a couple of issues back and a few other pieces, the case hasn't attracted much attention from the U.S. media. But it ought to. Because it's a very interesting glimpse of where government regulation of business is heading. For example, one of the items on the indictment is a birthday party thrown for Lady Black—Conrad's missus—at La Grenouille in New York in 2000. The party cost $60,000—Hollinger paid 40 grand, Conrad chipped in 20—and the government regards this as a "crime" that "stole" money rightfully belonging to the company's shareholders. Day in, day out, one of the plonkingly humorless prosecutors grills witnesses about whether there was a corporate logo at the dinner or whether any business conversations were held.

Well, business doesn't really work quite like that, does it? Nor does government, come to that. At the white-tie banquet George W. Bush hosted for the Queen the other day, the President and Her Majesty didn't negotiate any new treaties between the soup and fish or coordinate an "exit strategy" for Iraq over dessert. Yet the cost of the event will still be picked up by U.S. taxpayers. And good luck arguing that's a "crime."

If there's one thing the government lacks it's a sense of proportion.

Conrad's spouse is Barbara Amiel, and she was Hollinger's vice-president of editorial. That wasn't the usual non-job for the trophy wife: Miss Amiel is one of the most successful journalists in the world. Before her marriage, she was the first female editor of any North American metro daily (the *Toronto Sun*) and a columnist-of-the-year award-winner for her work in Britain's newspaper of record (the *Times*). As the foreign stuff doesn't seem to count for much with U.S. prosecutors, it should also be noted that the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* have also called on her services.

Her "birthday party" wasn't exactly a relaxing social occasion. She found herself sitting next to a man she'd never met before—Donald Trump—to whom shortly thereafter Black sold the *Chicago Sun-Times* building. I'm not a great fan of the many Trump Towers sprouting across the fruited plain, but in this case the deal not only enriched Hollinger shareholders, it also rid the Windy City of one of the most hideous eyesores on the Chicago River. Barbara's birthday paid off big-time for Mayor Daley and his constituents.

It was that kind of evening: Hollinger directors and clients and media figures with a sprinkling of Hollinger columnists singing for their supper. When Tyco's Dennis Kozlowski threw his (non-executive) spouse a party, the company ponied up over a million bucks to cover the cost of Jimmy Buffett and his band, dozens of muscular hunks decoratively posed around the room and wearing only the briefest of briefs, and an ice sculpture of Michelangelo's David with a vodka-spouting penis. At Barbara's bash, the Donald was fully clothed and there wasn't a penis in the entire joint that could serve you a decent martini. Indeed, the wonder is La Grenouille agreed to let Hollinger buy out the restaurant for a mere 60 grand.

In Alan Keyes terms, Black is having to justify the part he charged. I reckon that in stumping up for a third of the bill he did, in fact, overpay: The event was certainly more than 67 percent business, not least for Barbara. Presumably, the U.S. government feels differently: Possibly they'd have been happier if Black had paid two-thirds personally, or maybe 80 percent or 95 percent. But we're arguing about proportions, and if there's one thing the government lacks it's a sense of proportion.

There are no "victims" to this crime. The prosecutors insist the Hollinger shareholders are victims, but they've declined to call any. A month before Barbara's party, Hollinger sold its Canadian papers for $3.5 billion—the biggest deal in Canuck history and very good for investors. How many business events disguised as social events are held in American cities every night of the week? If a shareholder objects, that's between him and management. But for the government to attempt to criminalize the question is a colossal power grab.

If your smallish company has revenues of $50 million, you'll spend $2 million doing the paperwork to comply with Sarbanes-Oxley. Sticking the shareholders for two mil in paperwork is good "corporate governance," but sticking them for 40 grand to help close a deal with Donald Trump is a "crime." If "excess" is the issue, I know which I prefer. **NR**

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Demand that your elected officials take action to fix the broken lawsuit system – so you can spend your hard-earned dollars on your family – not on lawsuit abuse.

To find out more about the costs of lawsuit abuse, or to read the full Harris poll results, please visit: **www.InstituteForLegalReform.com**

2007 STATE RANK

DE 1	NH 6	SD 11	NC 16	CO 21	NJ 26	GA 31	FL 36	AR 41	IL 46
MN 2	TN 7	VA 12	OR 17	WY 22	VT 27	PA 32	SC 37	HI 42	AL 47
NE 3	IN 8	KS 13	MA 18	MI 23	NV 28	KY 33	OK 38	AK 43	LA 48
IA 4	UT 9	CT 14	NY 19	OH 24	MD 29	MO 34	NM 39	TX 44	MS 49
ME 5	WI 10	AZ 15	ND 20	WA 25	ID 30	RI 35	MT 40	CA 45	WV 50

[1] A December 2006 Tillinghast Towers Perrin study estimated the cost of the U.S. tort system to be $880 per capita or $3,520 for the average family of four.

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